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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JAMES KLUGMANN — PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

BETTY MATTHEWS — PARTY BUILDING PROSPECTS

A. L. MERSON — PROBLEMS OF THE ENGLISH BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

DISCUSSION:

JANE CORBETT — WHAT DOES MUSIC EXPRESS?

JOHN LEWIS — LOGIC AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

JEAN FELDMAR — CHILDREN IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Marxism Today

Vol. 7 No. 10

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Editorial Comments

BRITISH Marxists have always argued against the reformist conception of the neutral state, and shown that the British state was an organ of capitalist power. This was effectively demonstrated in a book by John Gollan on *The British Political System*, and a later work by Harvey and Hood on *The British State*.

Some apologists of British State neutrality have replied that, whatever the class character of the State *in the past*, the *contemporary* "welfare state" was quite different and completely democratic.

It is interesting that more and more thoroughly non-Marxist sources have been weighing in in recent months with evidence that substantiates the Marxist thesis.

Oxbridge Diplomats

There was an interesting article, for instance, in the *New Statesman* (16.8.63) by Geoffrey McDermott who first entered the Diplomatic Service in 1935 and experienced first hand its ruling class composition.

"Up to a few years ago", he wrote, "we had two prize exhibits in the senior ranks of the Foreign Service who had not been to public schools. Their names were quoted with discreet pride whenever the modernisation of the F.S. was questioned."

But that was "a few years ago". What about today?

McDermott continues:

> "Today, given that the numbers of the Services have swelled enormously, you will find no greater proportion among the senior ranks. There is nobody from a Redbrick University.
>
> "Not only so, but in Grades I and II (as they are now bureaucratically named) consisting of the first dozen and next two dozen members of the Service, there is an extraordinary predominance of Old Etonians and Old Wykehamists (Harrow is not in this race). No less than seven out of the top nine men in the Foreign Office come from Eton or Winchester."

It is serious, he adds, that the F.S. is not succeeding in recruiting "more than a small proportion of non-public schoolboys or of 'Redbrick' University graduates today".

Further ammunition comes from that definitely non-Marxist journal known as *The Times*. The issue of August 22nd was discussing the recruitment of officers to the British Army.

The Defence Correspondent deplored the fact that

> "the Army's officer recruitment campaign, mainly conducted through press advertising . . . appears to be attracting large numbers of applicants of poor quality."

Most of these, it seems, have to be rejected. Why? What is meant by 'poor quality'?

Public School Army

In this connection it is interesting to examine the *method* of selection of potential officers. Those who pass a preliminary examination, *The Times* Defence Correspondent explains, are put through a series of tests "to analyse character and detect powers of leadership". His impression is that "it would be hard for an unsuitable candidate to slip through the net. . . . The emphasis is still heavily on character—often at the expense of intelligence and education".

We are getting warmer. Selection, it seems, is for character and intelligence. What then is character? The Defence Correspondent continues:

> "Character and personality are still looked upon as essential officer qualities, and the opinion in the Army is that this is still largely a monopoly of the traditional officer-producing schools. Apart from Welbeck, the Army's own boarding school, by far the greatest number of officers still come from Eton, Marlborough, Wellington and the other big public schools."

Many Army officers, he adds

> "are convinced that the State schools are so preoccupied with the General Certificate of Education that they neglect the less formal but equally important training that is identified with life in a boarding school."

We seem to have arrived. "Character" means the sort of character that is moulded in the top Public Schools. "Capacity for Leadership" means capacity to exude ruling class attitudes. The "poor quality" of the (presumably) rejected candidates means that they come from the wrong background or have the wrong ideas.

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Our Gentlemen Police

Let us pursue our voyage of discovery to the columns of the, we believe, non-Marxist *Sunday Times* (25.8.63). We find yet another lament entitled "*Thin on Top*".

The late Lord Trenchard, when appointed Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in 1931, proceeded, states the author of the article, to create the famous Hendon Police College

> "to produce well-bred, characterful leaders on Service lines".

Our columnist (accurately) describes the tremendous resistance (both amongst the progressive movement in general and from the ranks of the police themselves) to this clear effort to maintain the key positions of the police in flagrantly ruling-class hands. So much so, that when Trenchard went, his college went also.

The college went, but the public-school policeman remained. Today, as our writer explains

> "the products of Trenchard's reviled college are providing the backbone of the leadership".

No fewer than twenty-seven ex-Hendon men are Chief Constables of police forces outside the Metropolitan Area; another five are Assistant Chief Constables:

> "By the end of the year all six top men at Scotland Yard will be Hendon-bred."

But what of the future? This is the problem. With the retirement one by one of the public-school policemen in perspective, where will the new leaders, *with the right characters*, come from?

No need for despair. It appears that a new college, the "National Police College at Bramshill House, Hampshire", has opened. Its students, it is true, must have survived two years on the beat. But for all that they will be

> "judged more on their quality as 'potential officer material' than anything else".

After a preliminary examination the candidate

> "goes before a 'country house' selection board which would have warmed Trenchard's heart, then on to a year's course at the Police College. . . .
>
> "The Home Office believes the scheme will attract the right leaders of the future, the men who could make Chief Constables in twenty years' time".

It appears that at the college there is a "dining-in" night when the sergeants, in dinner jackets or best blues

> "dine among the College silver".

But, as silver may not, in itself, be sufficient

> "full use is made of the baronet and five knights on the board of governors".

"We are trying to turn clumsy big policemen into gentlemen", said one police officer to the *Sunday Times* correspondent. Perhaps a more accurate description of the general strategy would have been —"we are trying to put gentlemen, people with a ruling class background and/or outlook, into the key positions of the police"—and, of course, of the army, the Foreign Office, and of the state as a whole.

After Imperialism

Michael Barrat Brown has for many years been a close student of British foreign trade, and his book *After Imperialism* (Heinemann 63s.) contains much valuable data. It is therefore a great pity that he has chosen to conduct a running fight against some of the concepts elaborated by Lenin in *Imperialism; the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*

Mr. Barrat Brown admits that Lenin's analysis of imperialism fully fits the situation between the wars, when monopoly capitalism was developing, when tariff barriers were rising, and when all the major capitalist countries were concerned with preserving their colonies, as spheres of investment and as sources of raw materials.

But he perversely argues that Lenin's analysis of imperialism did not fit the situation in which it was written in 1916, particularly in relation to British imperialism.

> "Lenin's analysis of imperialism was based on what has been called a 'composite picture' of imperialism, into which he drew separate elements from German, French, British and United States economic developments. It was *not the result of the analysis of general tendencies to be found in all capitalist economies.* The composite picture thus falls down on examination, *but from it Lenin was brilliantly able to foretell what was to come.* The composite picture was to fit Britain in the 1920s, and the U.S.A. in the 1950s, far better than it fitted Britain or Germany, or the U.S.A. before 1913" (Italics ours).

This whole passage is chockful of misconceptions and illogicalities. In a footnote we are told that it was Mr. John Hughes who described Lenin's brochure as a "composite picture" of imperialism. Evidently Mr. Barrat Brown has forgotten that it was Lenin himself who in the preface to his book dated July 1920, indicated that it was his purpose in writing the book four years before "to present, on the basis of summarised returns of irrefutable bourgeois statistics and the admissions of bourgeois scholars of all countries *a composite picture* of the world capitalist system in its international relationships at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the eve of the first world imperialist war".

It is ludicrous to argue that Lenin's book did not contain "the result of the general tendencies to be found in all capitalist economies", and then to admit that it was "brilliantly able to foretell what was to come". Surely that was possible only on the basis of a correct analysis of general tendencies.

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Mr. Barrat Brown says that Lenin's description was based on "what he knew of German capitalism. The description undoubtedly fits German pressure after 1900 in Africa and down the Berlin-Baghdad railway line. It does not fit the British situation".

Lenin on Britain

Mr. Barrat Brown quotes Lenin's definition of Imperialism that "Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development in which the domination of the monopolies and finance capital had established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe amongst the biggest capitalist powers has been completed". He then tries to demonstrate that Britain, at the time that "Imperialism" was written did not quite fit into this picture, suggesting that Lenin was ignorant of some of the essential features of the British situation. Barrat Brown tells us that "British industry still regards the whole world as its market for goods and capital and relied on free trade and the navy to hold what it had" as if Lenin had not known that British imperialism was clinging on to free trade. Yet Britain's absence of protective tariffs is actually one of the reasons cited by Lenin for the slower development of monopolies in Britain as compared with Germany and America.

"Monopoly and finance capital were not as fully developed nor as inter-connected in Britain before 1913, as they were in Germany or on the continent", we are told by Mr. Barrat Brown. That however is surely a half truth. There was a slower development of monopoly in Britain but nevertheless there was development, and what the writers of the day referred to as "the Trust Movement" was already under considerable criticism. If there still was free trade it was under heavy challenge. The Tory Party under the leadership of Bonar Law, which held a majority of British constituencies (the Liberal majority in Parliament was only possible with Irish support) was in favour of protective tariffs. Though financial capital was not as closely linked with industry as on the continent, Britain was still the greatest exporter of capital in the world and this export was effectively under the control of the finance oligarchy in the city. The greater part of the world's capital exports were under its direction. Because of this the drive for empire, or rather for an expansion of the existing Empire, was probably greater than in any other country in the capitalist world. This drive was accompanied by an exceedingly active drive of British diplomacy, to isolate Germany, as its leading imperialist challenger. Imperialist Britain was far from being the passive recipient of German imperialist aggressive pressure in the years immediately preceding 1914.

Imperialism

It would have helped Mr. Barrat Brown if he had pondered on Lenin's point that "Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism and even before capitalism. Rome founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and practised imperialism. But "general" disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background, *the fundamental difference between social-economic formations*, inevitably turn into the most vapid banality or bragging like the comparison: "Greater Rome and Greater Britain". *Even the capitalist colonial policy of previous stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital*". (our italics)

Britain had a very extensive empire, with India as the "Brightest Jewel in the British Crown" before the emergence of monopoly capital in the late 19th century, and many of the tendencies inherent in that earlier phase of the Empire, were to be still active at a later stage. After a stage of sheer undiluted looting, the main interest in the earlier phase of Empire, was the development of trade and the creation of facilities that would enable that trade to expand. Objecting to Lenin's description of imperialism Mr. Barrat Brown says "British overseas investment at that time (before 1914) was investment by rentiers in rails and government stocks and not investment by imperial companies in overseas operations". True enough but this is a purely static analysis. The tendencies of the previous stage of capitalism existed, alongside the new tendencies of the monopoly capitalist era. The imperial companies were active in South Africa and in West Africa and were increasingly influential politically. Lenin was dealing with what was new and emerging, and that is why his analysis not only revealed the imperialist antagonisms which had exploded into world war, but showed their continued development after the war was over. That is why "Lenin was able brilliantly to foretell what was to come" which is surely the major test of the correctness of any theory.

Communists in Basutoland

Readers will recall that we published an account in April last year of the formation of the Communist Party of Lesotho (Basutoland) and the issuing of its programme. We have now received a copy of a new bulletin, *Tokoloho*, which is the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lesotho. This is a modest 6 pp. cyclostyled bulletin, but it is the voice of a courageous Party which is heading the fight for the independence of Basutoland.

The bulletin, *Tokoloho*, stresses:

> "In the current emergency it is essential that we be very clear in regard to two basic facts of the situation. The first is that we cannot rely on British Imperialism

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to protect Basutoland against the Republic. On the contrary the British will do everything to protect the Republic from the forces of progress sweeping across Africa. The struggle of the Basotho for freedom is part of those forces. We must rely on our strength and on reliable alliances with the African states and the mighty socialist camp, in particular, the Soviet Union. Secondly we must not base the policy of the nation on the idea that the present South African regime is strong and fairly permanent. That is the myth that the South African Republic itself is assiduously spreading. In fact the present regime in South Africa is arming itself precisely because it is in a weak position. It is isolated throughout the world. Inside the country it cannot count on the support of any but the privileged classes. We must base our country's policy on the future People's government of South Africa.

"The Communist Party of Lesotho uniting all revolutionary forces in the country will continue to work for immediate independence of our country which is the only way we can put a firm stop to the present drift. The Communist Party will work for a National Front with all those groups which genuinely desire independence despite our differences with them on other matters."

In view of the British Government's policy of appeasing Verwoerd over the High Commission Territories—Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland—this clear demand from Basutoland communists for the independence of their country should receive wide support in Britain.

Those interested in receiving this bulletin should write to: John Motloheloa, P.O. Box 330, Maseru, Basutoland.

Rutland Boughton

Rutland Boughton, the Communist composer who died in 1960, provides one of the most extreme examples of cultural victimisation to date. His best known work, the opera *The Immortal Hour*, was first produced in 1914, and enjoyed an unparalleled success, running for 218 performances, and an equal number in revival soon after. It thus holds the record for the number of consecutive performances in Britain of any English opera. It has been revived several times, always with success, including Sadler's Wells in 1953. And that is all, or more than all, that most people know about Rutland Boughton.

He was probably the first significant figure from the Arts and Sciences to identify himself with the Communist Party of Great Britain, which he joined in 1926, and at once threw himself into political controversy. He also pioneered the application of Marxism to musical theory and history, writing several books, including two studies of John Sebastian Bach. He did an immense amount of work with the early working class choirs and musical societies, including the Labour Choral Union (of which he was joint founder with Herbert Morrison), and the Clarion Singers.

All this was a great deal for the ruling class to swallow; but probably his unforgivable offence was during the Miners' Strike of 1926. His Choral Drama *Bethlehem* was performed at Church House, Westminster (of all places), in modern dress when he insisted on the stable being converted into an unmistakable miner's cottage!

Obviously someone who was prepared to smack the faces of the enemies of the working class in this way deserved special treatment; and he certainly got it, in the form of almost complete suppression. He continued to compose, but most of the works have never been performed, including operas in which it is said he managed to combine his deep interest in Arthurian Legend (he made a gallant effort to make Glastonbury into a musical centre) with his own political convictions.

"*The Queen of Cornwall*"

An opportunity to hear one of his most interesting operas will occur at St. Pancras Town Hall on October 29th and 30th when *The Queen of Cornwall* is to be performed. This is a setting of the masterly play for amateurs, or "mummers", which Thomas Hardy completed in 1923. Hardy was a great poet as well as a great novelist, and his very individual diction and his lyric gift produce a work which is not only most moving poetry but a penetrating and realist study of character as well. The love-potion and the chorus of "dead old Cornish men and women" do not obscure the absolutely truthful and contemporary treatment of the love-tragedy of four people; the subsidiary characters are perfectly drawn as well.

It is not often that a piece of literature of such quality is taken almost as it stands (Hardy agreed to the inclusion of some of his most popular lyrics) by a composer for an opera; and it is the measure of Boughton's achievement that he in every way enhances its quality.

The critics attempted to diminish *The Immortal Hour* by describing it as an "excursion into the Celtic twilight", and, superficially, this was plausible; but the *Queen of Cornwall* is utterly and completely realist.

Those who heard the Third Programme broadcast in 1951 will have realised that musically also, it is of great originality. Boughton was an admirer of Wagner; but the only connection here is an indirect one, via the refining and rarefying influence of Debussy. There are memories of *Pélleas and Mélisande* in atmosphere, though he far excels Debussy in the precise indication of character. He sets Hardy's splendid words in recitative which recalls the 17th Century masters Monteverdi and

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Purcell; and for the lyrics he has created melodies of great subtlety which could also be popular hits. Some of them have stayed to this day in the memory of people who heard them in the old Winter Gardens at Bournemouth fifty years ago. Add to this an English character in the music as definite as that of Vaughan Williams and, like his, derived from absorption of English folk music, and we have a great unrecognised masterpiece of English opera. These two performances should be the signal for the beginning of a proper appreciation of this outstanding figure of our movement and of English music.

Citizen of Two Worlds

When Thomas Paine died in New York in 1809, his great writing had already achieved much in the world, and he had innumerable devoted admirers among the unprivileged as well as the scholarly in both the Old World and the New. But he had equally stirred the anger of the ruling classes.

The influence of his many works, especially *Rights of Man*, has perhaps been as strong in attracting abuse from the privileged as in winning brave supporters, who have spread his views. As a recent article in the *Bulletin* of the Marx Memorial Library shows, publishers of Paine's *Rights of Man* in 1793 and later needed to be brave to face the savage prosecutions of the authorities.

The name of Thomas Paine was revered by many early radicals (never "Tom Paine", be it noted, which strangely was the way his enemies referred to him). Henry Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* among other publications used annually to announce celebrations of Paine's January birthday in the early nineteenth century, and there is evidence that, as well as publishing Paine's political works, the Chartists named a section of their membership after him about 1848. Some of the deepest roots of the Labour movement have been fed by the soil that was dug by Thomas Paine.

But Paine has been largely neglected by many, and one of his most faithful biographers, Moncure Conway (after whom London's Conway Hall is named), wrote:

> "The intimidated historians of the last generations, passing by this famous figure, left an historic vacuum, which has been filled with mingled fact and fable, unmanageable by any not prepared to give years to the task."

When the American Thomas Paine Foundation announced a few months ago that it was donating a statue of Paine to be erected next year to Thetford (Norfolk), his birthplace, local jingoes set up an abusive howl—answered quickly, soberly and authoritatively by a number of people in Thetford, Norwich and London. Now, a proposed Thomas Paine Society in Britain has been announced by Mr. R. W. Morrell (443 Meadow Lane, Nottingham), in a number of letters published recently in the press. The aim of the society is to secure for Paine the recognition that he deserves, and suggested methods are being canvassed for discussion at an inaugural meeting in London.

"*Challenge of Marxism*" *Week*

The programme for the *Challenge of Marxism* week which this journal is arranging, is now being widely distributed. It is an impressive programme of fifteen discussions and debates and a folk-song concert to be held in the six days from November 14th to 19th. A large number of the meetings have been crowded into the weekend so that people who live out of London can have an opportunity to attend and they are being offered a wide range of subjects—from philosophy to films—to choose from.

The speakers are all experts in their various fields—Bernal and Rowsell (Science), Dobb and Sargent (economics), Hobsbawm and Munby (History), Bush, Kettle, van Gyseghem, Heinemann, Russell and Cole (the arts), Cornforth (philosophy), Gollan (democracy), Aaronovitch and Halsey (sociology), Canon Collins and Matthews (war and peace).

The folk-song concert will bring together such notable exponents as Lloyd, McColl and the Ian Campbell singers.

In addition to the programme we are issuing a poster suitable for the notice boards of colleges, clubs, trade union branch rooms, etc., and we are trying to get these widely displayed. Readers can help by offering to put these up—copies will be sent on request. We would also welcome offers from readers to help as stewards for the meetings, especially during the weekend November 16th and 17th.

There is great interest in this big effort we are making to raise for public discussion the issues of our time and to bring out the contribution of Marxism in the fields of politics, science and culture.

All the signs are that the week will be highly successful.

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Peaceful Coexistence—Burning Issue of our Time

"The problem of war and peace is the most burning issue of our time" (Eighty-One Communist Parties' Statement, November, 1960)

James Klugmann

THE epoch in which we live is one of profound social change; on the time-scale of history one of rapid tempestuous change. When men and women in the future look back on these years of struggle they will marvel at the *speed* with which capitalism was defeated, ended, and socialist, then communist society, established in the world.

The present epoch began with the October 1917 Revolution, when imperialism ceased to be the *single* world system, and it will end when capitalism has ceased to exist as a system, and the whole world has taken the socialist road. It began with a weak, young inexperienced socialist country surrounded by hostile capitalism. Step by step the socialist forces have grown, the balance of class forces on a world scale has changed. It is now the socialist system in the world that is becoming the decisive factor in the development of history.

We live in a period of most rapid development of scientific knowledge, of technology, of the means of production, which deepens the contradictions of capitalism, and demonstrates more and more clearly the need for a new socialist organisation of society. This scientific knowledge that could, under socialism, so rapidly end poverty and hunger for the total population of the world, threatens, in the hands of imperialism, unprecedented destruction.

It is not surprising that in this epoch, in which two social systems—one dying, one developing—confront one another, deep problems should arise for the Marxists, the working class, the progressive and anti-imperialist movement.

The New Epoch

Nor is it strange that, in this situation of rapid changes, some differences should arise between Communist Parties in different stages of the struggle, facing different immediate problems in their own countries.

In each country Marxists work out their general line, their strategy, by applying the general principles of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions in their country and the world. From the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and all the leading Marxists of the world, from the experiences of all the different Parties, general principles can be culled, defined. But a strategy of struggle for a particular country or for the world can only be elaborated by applying these principles to specific conditions—*never in the abstract.*

It was by a concrete analysis of the world and of Britain at the beginning of the fifties that our British Communist Party was able to work out our long-term programme, the *British Road to Socialism.* It was on the basis of an analysis of the new epoch and the new relation of class forces in the world, that the twelve Communist and Workers' Parties elaborated the Statement of 1957 and the Eighty-One Parties the Statement of 1960.

A Marxist strategy, programme, perspective, demands not only a deep understanding of Marxist ideas but their application to a specific situation in time and in space. If we are to answer the burning questions of the time we must do so in the context of *the new epoch.*

Our epoch, which began with the October Revolution, is essentially one of transition from capitalism to socialism. As the Statement of the Eighty-One Communist Parties defined it, it is:

> "A time of struggle between two opposing systems, a time of socialist revolutions and national liberation revolutions, a time of the breakdown of imperialism, of the abolition of the colonial system, a time of transition of more peoples to the socialist path, of the triumph of socialism and communism on a world wide scale." [1]

As the epoch proceeded the area of socialism extended with the advances in Eastern Europe and the Far East, with the victory of the great Chinese Revolution, with the advance in Cuba. The anti-imperialist struggle began to sweep away colonial-

[1] 36 *Million Communists Say . . .* pp. 3-4.

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ism in great areas of the world and the working class and peace movements extended in the imperialist countries themselves. The forces of socialism and progress began to become stronger than the forces of imperialism. As the Eighty-One Parties' Statement put it:

> "Today it is the world socialist system and the forces fighting against imperialism, for a socialist transformation of society, that determine the main content, main trend and main features of the historical development of society." [2]

Contradictions

If we are properly to understand the new epoch, we have to see *all* the forces of socialism and progress in their relations with one another and *all* the contradictions within world society.

We have to see the *combined* strength of the socialist countries, the newly independent countries and the national liberation movement, and the socialist, democratic and peace movement in the imperialist countries themselves. Moreover, the divisions between the imperialists are an indirect source of progressive strength.

It is here, already, that, studying many of the documents published in recent months by the Chinese Communist Party, we begin to find ourselves in deep disagreement with them. We find again and again that they are belittling the role of the socialist countries and of the working class and broad progressive movement in the imperialist countries and seeing in an isolated one-sided way the anti-imperialist, national liberation movement.

Lenin in his *Imperialism,* showed how, in the epoch of imperialism, in which a small group of great imperialist powers dominated, economically and politically, the whole world, there were three fundamental contradictions—capital versus labour —imperialism versus the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, imperialism versus imperialism. With the new epoch and the victorious October Revolution, a new fourth contradiction emerged —socialism versus imperialism (the socialist state —later states—versus the imperialist states). All the three previous contradictions remained, indeed were deepened, *but the contradiction of socialism versus capitalism became the main contradiction of the new epoch,* and the "world socialist system" became, in the words of the Eighty-One Parties' Statement, "the decisive factor in the development of society".[3]

In the Letter of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party of June 14th, 1963, we find a quite different appreciation:

> "The various types of contradiction in the contemporary world are concentrated in the vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America; these are the most vulnerable areas under imperialist rule and the storm centres of world revolution dealing direct blows at imperialism. . . . In a sense, therefore, the whole course of the international proletarian revolution hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the people of these areas, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the world's population." [4]

The Chinese press, as reviewed in the daily *Hsinhua News Agency* or in the *Peking Review,* has published little information in recent months of the successful building of socialism and communism in the U.S.S.R. and the socialist countries of Europe. Indeed, insofar as the U.S.S.R. is concerned it has concentrated on reproducing certain self-critical articles from the Soviet press exposing this or that particular weakness. There has been very little about struggle of the working class movement, the Communist Parties, the peace movement in countries like France, Italy, the U.S.A., Great Britain; very much more on the criticism of different Communist Parties in the capitalist countries.

The magnificent struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples against imperialism has been one of the outstanding factors of our epoch, it has been one *major factor* in bringing about the new relation of class forces in the world. But it does not, in any way, belittle the national liberation movement, to show it in its relationship to the world socialist system and the working class and democratic movement in the imperialist countries. It does not belittle it to show the immense help that it has received from the socialist countries and the working class and democratic movement in the capitalist countries.

It is the *totality* of progressive forces which makes up the superiority of the progressive forces over the forces of reaction in the world today, it is their *combined inter-related* strength. To see them in segregation, isolation, not only is an incorrect picture, but can lead in practice to their division.

It can lead, too, to an underestimation of the possibilities, the potentialities, that are opened for the international working class movement in the new epoch.

Socialism Through Peace

Of all the issues that arise in the present epoch the most urgent is that of world peace; in the words of the Statement of the Eighty-One Com-

[2] *ibid.* p. 4.
[3] *ibid.* p. 4.
[4] Letter of Central Committee of Communist Party of China, June 14th, 1963, pp. 12-13.

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munist Parties "the problem of war and peace is the most burning problem of our time".[5] Can the transition from capitalism to socialism, the essential content of our epoch, be achieved without a third world war?

To this question already in 1951, in the original draft of the *British Road to Socialism,* our own Party answered clearly in the affirmative. We declared "that a third world war is neither necessary nor inevitable", we rejected "the 'theory' of the inevitable war between the socialist and capitalist camps". "On the contrary," we stated, "peaceful coexistence of socialism and capitalism is possible." The twelve Parties of the socialist countries in 1957 and the eighty-one Communist Parties meeting in November 1960, all gave the same reply.

It is an old-time capitalist slander that Communists wanted to establish socialism through war, that they thought that social revolution can only arise from war between states. Communists have always striven to advance to socialism through world peace. What is new in the present epoch is that, on the one hand the forces of socialism and peace have reached a stage which makes the perspective possible, and, on the other, that the destructive power of modern weapons makes it imperative to exert every conceivable effort to avoid world war.

Marxists pride themselves on examining *real* conditions, in facing the truth, objective reality. It does not help to gloss over the fact that the destructive power of nuclear weapons is something, in the Marxist sense, *qualitatively* new. A world war fought with nuclear weapons could well mean the death of hundreds and hundreds of millions, suffering of such a kind for hundreds of millions more that would make them wish for death, the elimination of whole states. "For Britain," our Executive Committee Statement said in January of this year, "nuclear war could well mean our national extinction. Who would be left to build socialism in the heap of radio-active ruins which would remain?" [6]

We cannot accept the approach of the Chinese comrades to this question of nuclear weapons.

Chinese Views

In 1946 Comrade Mao Tse-tung stated in a talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong:

> "The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible but in fact it isn't." [7]

On November 18th, 1957, speaking at the Moscow meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Comrade Mao said:

> "Let us imagine, how many people will die if war should break out? Out of the world's population of 2,700 million, one-third—or, if more, half—may be lost. It is they and not we who want to fight; when a fight starts, atomic and hydrogen bombs may be dropped. I debated this question with a foreign statesman. He believed that if an atomic war was fought, the whole of mankind would be annihilated. I said if the worst came to the worst and half of mankind died, the other half would remain while imperialism would be razed to the ground and the whole world would become socialist; in a number of years there would be again 2,700 million people and definitely more." [8]

The article in the *Reg Flag* of April 16th, 1960, later republished in the collection *Long Live Leninism,* stated that should the U.S. or other imperialists dare to fly in the face of the will of all the peoples by launching a war using atomic and nuclear weapons

> "the result will only be the very speedy destruction of the monsters themselves encircled by the peoples of the world, and certainly not the so-called annihilation of mankind. . . .
>
> ". . . On the debris of imperialism, the victorious people would create very swiftly a civilisation thousands of times higher than the capitalist system and a truly beautiful future for themselves." [9]

No Paper Tiger

The *Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government* of September 1st, 1963, attacking an alleged view of "the Soviet leaders" that the whole of mankind would be annihilated in a nuclear war (a view for which no source was given) declares:

> "We do not agree with this pessimistic and despairing view of theirs. We say that if imperialism should unleash a nuclear war and the worst came to the worst, half of the world's population would be killed. We are optimistic about the future of mankind." [10]

How is it possible to describe as a "paper tiger" weapons that might destroy half of mankind?

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[5] 36 *Million Communists Say . . .* p. 14.

[6] *Restore the Unity of the International Communist Movement,* Statement of E.C. of C.P.G.B., January 12th, 1963.

[7] Quoted in *Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government* of September 1st, 1963 (*Hsinhua News Agency*).

[8] *ibid.*

[9] *Long Live Leninism,* 1960, pp. 21-22.

[10] *Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government,* September 1st, 1963 (*Hsinhua News Agency*).

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Explanation of the facts, far from having the effect of numbing the people, of making them shrink or capitulate in the face of nuclear blackmail by the imperialists, can only help to rally the great mass of the people and their organisations for the struggle for peace.

It is not helpful to paint a "rosy" picture of the speedy erection of the new civilisation on the ruins of the old one. Nor is it cowardly to face the disastrous consequences of nuclear warfare and mobilise the mass of the people to avoid it.

The essential lesson must be—*the need and the possibility for peaceful coexistence.*

Peaceful Coexistence

In statement after statement the Chinese comrades have distorted the conception of peaceful coexistence put forward by the great majority of Parties within the international communist movement. They have painted some "unholy alliance" between capitalist and socialist states.[11] They have accused Party after Party of "prettifying" imperialism, rejecting the class struggle, damping down or even betraying the national liberation struggle, "freezing" the existing relations between socialism and capitalism in the interests of peaceful coexistence. Such attitudes have, without quotation of source, been attributed anonymously to "modern revisionists", "certain people", or more openly in recent months, to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other Communist Parties.

The Chinese comrades again and again erect some "Aunt Sally" from their own imagination in order to knock her down again. It becomes essential, therefore, to repeat again and again what *is* the conception of peaceful coexistence held by our Party and by the great majority of Parties, and also *what it is not.*

Our Party has not at any stage made any attempt at "embellishing" imperialism, international, American, or British, or to disguise its unchanged aggressive character. We have exposed and combated NATO, CENTO, SEATO, imperialist activities in Berlin, Taiwan, Laos, the Congo, etc. We have constantly pointed to American imperialism as the most reactionary force in the world, and exposed in detail the role of British imperialism. Imperialism has not, of a sudden, become peaceful; it is still "the soil for aggressive war".

What *has* changed is the strength of the forces of socialism and peace. It is those forces—the *combination* of the countries of the socialist world, the national liberation movement at its various stages, the world peace movement, the international working class movement, and, above all, the Communist Parties—which if united, active and vigilant, can impose the will for peace of the peoples of the world on the imperialist forces driving to war. And the strength of the forces of peace in the world is assisted by the divisions between and within the imperialist powers.

The essence of the conception of peaceful coexistence is the imposition of peace on those that drive to war by the combined forces of peace in the world.

Class Struggle

"Peaceful coexistence designates," write the Chinese comrades in their *Letter of June 14th,* 1963, "a relationship between countries with different social systems and must not be interpreted as one pleases. It should not be extended to apply to the relations between oppressed and oppressor countries or between oppressed and oppressor nations." [12] "Peaceful coexistence," they continue later, "cannot replace the revolutionary struggles of the peoples." [13]

But against which Communist Party is this argument directed? Neither the British Communist Party nor any other has ever argued in this way. Let us be clear what we stand for, what has been put forward in successive Statements of our Party, which is embodied in the recent Communist Party syllabus *Communism and the World Today.*

Peaceful coexistence between states of different social formation does *not* mean peaceful coexistence of classes within the capitalist countries, i.e. an end to class struggle. On the contrary the stronger the all-round class struggle within the capitalist countries, the greater the possibility of peaceful coexistence. The coexistence of states with different social systems is itself a form of the class struggle between capitalism and socialism.

Peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems does *not* mean the rejection of the national liberation struggle. On the contrary, the more powerful the national liberation struggle against imperialism and the stronger the world solidarity with the national liberation forces, the greater the possibility of peaceful coexistence. It is completely wrong to oppose the two aspects of struggle as the Chinese comrades so continuously do. Nor does the fight for peaceful coexistence exclude national liberation wars.

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[11] *The New "Holy Alliance" will Come to no Better End than the Old.* Article of *Red Flag,* Commentator, published in *Hsinhua News Agency,* September 10th, 1963.

[12] *Letter of Central Committee of Communist Party of China,* June 14th, 1963, p. 34.

[13] *ibid.* p. 35.

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In this connection Comrade Khrushchov made the position of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union abundantly clear:

> "There will be wars of liberation as long as imperialism exists. These are revolutionary wars; such wars are not only permissible but even unavoidable since the colonialists do not grant independence to people voluntarily. Therefore it is only through struggle, including armed struggle, that the people can win their freedom and independence." [14]

The Chinese comrades in recent months are making wild accusations that "certain people" (meaning the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of other socialist countries, and the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries) are

> "taking a passive or scornful or negative attitude towards the struggles of the oppressed nations for liberation. They are in fact protecting the interests of monopoly capital, betraying those of the proletariat, and degenerating into social democrats." [15]

Nothing could be more in contradiction with the facts. As part of the general fight for peaceful coexistence the Communist Parties, and, above all, that of the Soviet Union, have continuously supported the national liberation struggles. Nor is this support unrecognised. Speaking in May of this year at Moscow, Fidel Castro affirmed:

> "The might of the socialist camp stays the hand of the lovers of military gambles, guarantees peace, and creates the most favourable conditions for the people's struggle against colonial and imperialist aggression." [16]

The struggle for peaceful coexistence is strengthened by the national liberation struggle, and vice versa.

Transition to Socialism as a Background to Peace

The Chinese comrades argue as if the struggle for peaceful coexistence is being used as a cover to keep things as they are, to make dirty deals with American imperialism, to "freeze" the status quo and, therefore, to stem, hinder, the onward march to socialism. They write as if negotiation with capitalist states soiled the hands of Communists.

But it has never been the aim of Communists to "export" socialism by force, to spread socialism through the world against the will of the peoples of different countries. Communists have always taught that socialism cannot be imposed from above or without, that it must be established by the working class and its allies in each country, that each people will establish socialism at their own time and in their own way.

The conception of peaceful coexistence does *not* imply belief in the perpetuation of capitalism. On the contrary! Communists are confident that, step by step, in country after country, the working people led by the working class will carry through a socialist revolution, win political power, begin to construct socialism, and that socialism that first was established in one-sixth of the world, and now established in one-third, will spread to two-thirds and then the totality of the globe.

Lenin was very clear that you could not speed up the revolution by "jogging" it from outside. He wrote in 1918:

> "Maybe the authors [of a resolution expressing lack of confidence in the Central Committee] believe that the world revolution needs *jogging*, and that it can be jogged only by war—and in no case by peace, which might give the masses the impression that imperialism was being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, which has always been opposed to 'jogging' revolutions, which develop as the acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions ripen. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is indispensable under all conditions." [17]

The burning question is can, in the present world relations of class forces, this world transition to socialism be accomplished without a third world war?

That it can and should so be accomplished is an *essential strategic aim* of the international communist movement endorsed at the Eighty-One-Parties' Conference in 1960.

The Chinese comrades argue that peaceful coexistence should

> "never be described as the main content of the transition from capitalism to socialism, still less should it be asserted that peaceful coexistence is mankind's road to socialism." [18]

But such a formulation can only confuse. No Marxist has ever said that peaceful coexistence is an *alternative* to social revolution, to establishing

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[14] *Open Letter of Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* July 14th, 1963, Soviet Booklet, p. 15.

[15] *Letter of Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party,* June 14th, 1963, p. 15.

[16] Fidel Castro—Speech at Moscow on May 23rd, 1963.

[17] V. I. Lenin, *Strange and Monstrous,* February 28th and March 1st, 1918, in Selected Works in 2 Vols., Vol. II, p. 280.

[18] *Letter of Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party,* June 14th, 1963, p. 34.

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the rule of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat, to building socialism. The point is that we must exert every conceivable effort to see that peaceful coexistence is the background on which the transition to socialism takes place.

This is not some tactical question, some manoeuvre to expose capitalism, but *an essential strategy of the whole socialist movement of the world.* And every Marxist and every Marxist Party should fight to see that "mankind's road to socialism" *does* take place in conditions of peaceful coexistence.

Lenin on Peaceful Coexistence

When reading the most recent statements of the Communist Party of China, of the *Red Flag*, the *People's Daily*, etc., we see ever more open attacks on the policy of the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government. It is made to look as if the present leaders of the Soviet Union were, in their foreign policy, for instance, deserting Leninism.

One gets the impression that the Chinese comrades are saying that for a socialist country to negotiate with a capitalist country is capitulation, that it is revisionist to see one section of the bourgeoisie of a capitalist country playing a more progressive role than another section, that it is wrong to insist that an essential method by which a socialist country exerts its influence on the people of the non-socialist countries is by the example it gives in organising production and society in a way superior to capitalism.

No one more than Lenin would have insisted that with the changing world, with the changing relation of class forces, new possibilities would arise for the working class, but, already in the few all too short years between the October Revolution and his death, Lenin began to put forward the essence of the policy of peaceful coexistence.

He stood consistently for relations of peace between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, even the most reactionary imperialist ones. "The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic", he wrote in December 1919,

> "wishes to live in peace with all peoples and devote all its efforts to internal development in order to put production, transport and government affairs in order on the basis of the Soviet system. . . ." [19]

He vigorously opposed those who, immediately after the revolution, wanted to put forward peace terms in the form of an *ultimatum.* "An ultimatum," he wrote, may prove fatal to our whole cause:

> "The objection is raised that by not resorting to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people." [20]

He was absolutely clear that there would be divisions within the capitalists which could be of assistance to the struggle for socialism, and that some sections of the bourgeoisie would, in a given situation, play a role that was more favourable to the international socialist movement. "Some American manufacturers," he said, in a talk with Lincoln Eyre, Correspondent of *The World* in February 1920,

> "appear to have begun to realise that making money in Russia is wiser than making war against Russia, which is a good sign. . . .
>
> "All the world knows that we are prepared to make peace on terms the fairness of which even the most imperialistic capitalists could not dispute. . . .
>
> "I know of no reason why a socialist state like ours cannot do business indefinitely with capitalist countries. . . ." [21]

Or again, writing of the Soviet preparation for participation at the Genoa Conference in March 1922:

> ". . . it matters a lot to us whether we shall deal with those representatives of the bourgeois camp who are inclined to solve the problem by war, or with those who favour pacifism, even the worst kind of pacifism that from the Communist point of view will not stand the slightest criticism. . . ." [22]

When Spargo, an American reformist, attacked the Soviet Union for making deals with capitalist powers, Lenin declared that Spargo

> "blamed us for our talk about making deals with the capitalist powers, and adduced it as evidence of the complete collapse of communism. . . .
>
> "It seems to me that those who think about it will say the opposite. No better proof of the material and moral victory of the Russian Soviet Republic over the capitalists of the whole world

[19] V. I. Lenin in *Draft Resolution Presented to Eighth All-Russian Conference of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the Question of Foreign Policy,* written December 2nd, 1919.

[20] V. I. Lenin, *Report on Peace,* delivered at Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, October 26th (November 8th), 1917.

[21] V. I. Lenin, *Talk with Lincoln Eyre,* published in the American *The World,* February 21st, 1920, and republished in *Lenin on Peaceful Coexistence,* Moscow, 1963.

[22] V. I. Lenin, *Political Report of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B),* March 27th, 1922.

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> could be found than the fact that the powers who made war on us . . . have been compelled, against their own wishes, to enter upon the path of commercial relations. . . ." [23]

Lenin always insisted that after the revolution, socialist countries, above all, exert an influence by their example in building a socialist system superior in every way to preceding capitalist society.

Speaking in December 1920 to a meeting of Moscow active Party workers he dealt with the problem of building socialism as the "power of example". This is not easy, he said, "in this case victory is not to be achieved by enthusiasm, assault, or self-sacrifice, but in dull, petty, day-to-day work. This is something indubitably harder," and he continued:

> "Socialism has the power of example. Force is a power against the one who wants to restore his domination. But there the significance of force ends and after that it is influence and example that is powerful. We have to show in practice, by way of example, the significance of communism." [24]

On an international scale, too, it is this that will be decisive, he added elsewhere:

> "We exert our main influence on the international revolution by our economic policy. . . . In this field the struggle is transferred on a world-wide scale. If we accomplish this task, we shall win on an international scale for certain and forever." [25]

Lenin was writing at the very beginning of the new epoch of transition to socialism, but he already laid down the essential principles of the strategy of peaceful coexistence. Far from "deserting Leninism", a study of Lenin's writing shows us that Comrade Khrushchov and the Soviet leaders in the new situation of the world today are applying Lenin's conceptions of peaceful coexistence.

Strength and Reason

For a socialist country to carry out in practice a policy of peaceful coexistence demands a combination of firmness on questions of principle with readiness to negotiate, a combination of strength and reason.

The fight for negotiations is not based on any illusions that imperialism has "changed", or that the contradictions between the two systems can be *solved* by diplomacy. The basis for the possibility of such negotiations and partial agreements is not a change in the nature of imperialism but in the balance of world forces, which compels the imperialist leaders (or sections of them) to take account of the new strength of the forces of socialism and peace.

Yet, whilst proclaiming support for the aim of peaceful coexistence as set out in the 1960 Statement of the Eighty-One Parties, the Chinese comrades attack as capitulation or betrayal every negotiation conducted by the Soviet Union with the imperialist countries in the recent period. This was most clearly seen in the tense Cuban crisis last autumn or the signature of the partial Test Ban Treaty at the end of July this year.

Cuba

In the January Statement of our Executive Committee we put forward our views on the Cuban crisis:

> "The Cuban crisis was the most dangerous world crisis since 1945. The world was on the brink of thermo-nuclear catastrophe. The aim of Soviet policy on Cuba, an aim endorsed by progressive opinion all over the world, was to prevent nuclear war and to prevent the invasion of Cuba. Nuclear war was prevented. Cuba was not invaded. For this world humanity must above all thank the Soviet Union." [26]

At the tensest moment of the crisis the Chinese comrades issued statements implying that a "Munich" was in process.

It is not in any way to belittle the magnificent struggle of the Cuban people, to see the all-important aid in preserving Cuban independence afforded by the Soviet Union and the socialist camp as a whole. It is precisely the *combination* of *all* the forces of peace—the strength of the socialist countries, above all the U.S.S.R.; the national liberation movement (in this case above all the struggle of the Cuban people); the working class and peace movement in the countries of capitalism (in this case the British peace movement played no dishonourable role); the indirect assistance of the divisions between the imperialists (including within the circles of American imperialism)—that *together* preserved peace and Cuban independence. To separate one of these forces from another, is divisive and dangerous.

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[23] V. I. Lenin, Speech delivered at the Moscow Guberna Conference of the R.C.P.(B), November 21st, 1920.

[24] V. I. Lenin, Speech delivered at a Meeting of the Active Party Workers of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B), December 6th, 1960.

[25] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian fourth edition, Vol. 32, p. 413.

[26] *Restore the Unity of the International Communist Movement*, Statement of the E.C. of the Communist Party of Great Britain, January 12th, 1963.

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Fidel Castro himself, in the strongest language, paid tribute to the peace role of the U.S.S.R.:

> "It will always be a great country which, for the sake of the defence of a small people, living thousands of miles away, risked the well-being achieved in forty-five years of creative work, and at the price of tremendous sacrifices, in a thermo-nuclear war!
>
> "The Soviet Union, which lost more lives in the Great Patriotic War against the fascists than the entire population of Cuba, so as to defend its right to existence and to develop its tremendous riches, did not hesitate to take the risk of a big war in defence of our small country!
>
> "History has never known such an example of solidarity. . . ." [27]

The Test Ban Treaty

The Political Committee of the British Communist Party welcomed the signing of the partial Test Ban Treaty in its Statement of July 31st, 1963. It emphasised three positive aspects: (1) that it meant a halt to the poisoning of the atmosphere by the main nuclear powers; (2) that it opened the way to further negotiations on nuclear disarmament; (3) that it opened the way to further negotiations on all key issues with a view to making a break in the cold war and reaching agreement on specific questions.

The Statement did not, however, in any way exaggerate the significance of the Treaty. It clearly showed its limitations. The Treaty did not in any sense end the danger of war, the arms race or manufacture of nuclear weapons, nor did it ban underground testing. Like all *partial* agreements won in the struggle of socialism against capitalism, or the working class against the capitalist class, *it emerged from struggle and demanded further struggle.* In terms of Britain that means the fight for the removal of American nuclear bases, the fight for the renunciation by Britain of nuclear weapons, and the defeat of the NATO multilateral nuclear force.

The comrades of the Chinese Communist Party immediately launched a major political offensive against the Treaty, branded it as "capitulationism",[28] as marking "the surrender of the Soviet leaders to U.S. imperialism",[29] as a "big fraud" [30] and a "dirty fraud".[31] By the Treaty, a Chinese Government Statement declared:

> "The interests of the Soviet people have been sold out, the interests of the people of the countries in the socialist camp, including the people of China, have been sold out, and the interests of all the peace-loving people of the world have been sold out." [32]

Whilst the vast majority of states in the world, socialist, newly independent and capitalist, and the overwhelming majority of progressive organisations, trade unions, socialist and Communist Parties welcomed the Treaty as a *partial* step *in the right direction,* the Chinese comrades could not find language strong enough to condemn it.

They advanced the argument that the Treaty represented a "nuclear monopoly" [33] binding "the hands of all the peace-loving countries subject to the nuclear threat".[34] But this is to equate socialism and imperialism, the strength of socialism and the strength of imperialism. To equate U.S. imperialism and the U.S.S.R. is to equate the central force of imperialism and reaction with the central force of socialism and peace.

The Chinese Government claim that the greater number of socialist countries possessing nuclear weapons the better. But they isolate the issue from the real objective world. They refuse, on the one hand, to consider how damaging it would be for the economy of the other socialist countries if they had to use their resources for manufacturing nuclear weapons, how much, in this connection, they owe to the Soviet Union whose weapons defend the *whole* socialist world. On the other hand, they refuse to consider how the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the different countries of the socialist system would inevitably mean parallel proliferation to countries like Western Germany and Japan, countries, incidentally, with strong industrial economies in whose hands nuclear weapons would add greatly to the danger of war.

The nuclear weapons in the possession of the Soviet Union will continue in the future, as in the past, to defend the whole socialist camp, including the People's Republic of China, from U.S. imperialist nuclear aggression. The Soviet Government has, again and again, made that clear.

The Peace Movement

The struggle for peace develops on many different issues; around disarmament, complete ending of nuclear tests, the ending of military bases on British soil, the fight for international agreement on Berlin, the conclusion of a peace

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[27] Fidel Castro, *Speech in Moscow on May 23rd,* 1963, in Soviet Booklet *The U.S.S.R. and Cuba,* p. 30.
[28] *Statement by Spokesman of the Chinese Government,* September 1st, 1963.
[29] *ibid.*
[30] Statement of the Chinese Government of July 31st, 1963 (*Peking Review,* No. 31).
[31] *ibid.*
[32] *ibid.*
[33] *ibid.*
[34] *ibid.*

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treaty with Germany, the ending of the U.S. occupation of Taiwan and U.S. intervention in South Vietnam, for the entry of the People's Republic of China into the U.N. etc. New issues of peace constantly arise.

There are all sorts of peace organisations in Britain today; the British Peace Committee, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Committee of 100, national and local organisations of every sort.

The Communist Party will support every organisation that genuinely fights for peace, will strive especially to secure effective working class activity within the peace movement, will work for the broadest unity in action of all sections of the peace movement in Britain and the world.

Communists will, at one and the same time, work collectively and individually in the broad movement for peace, whilst they carry out their own *independent* work in the fight for peace. Many of those who first came to the peace movement and are ready to fight against one or other aspect of the threat of war, will not yet understand the imperialist roots of war, will not yet be prepared to fight against imperialism, still more for socialism.

Communists, therefore, whilst working loyally in the broad movement for peace, will carry out their own peace activities on higher political levels, with those ready on these levels to co-operate with them, fighting directly against imperialism, explaining the fundamental relation of imperialism and war, socialism and peace.

It is quite wrong to recognise as fighters for peace only those who are ready to accept a full Marxist analysis on the nature of war, to confuse the different levels of struggle, to try to "begin at the end", to demand that those just entering the struggle for peace on one or another immediate issue, shall as a condition for co-operation, accept a full Marxist programme.

It is just as if Communists fighting on economic issues should reject as useless, "palliating capitalism", ineffective, all the immediate trade union struggles on such issues as wages, hours, nationalisation, etc. and be ready to co-operate only with those who see the full socialist solution of the economic problems.

The Chinese comrades again and again have demanded that the international peace movement or other international movements should accept such advanced attitudes and forms of action. The only effect would be to divide these movements, to limit them to a vanguard, to reject from co-operation with them tens of thousands of honest people who are making first steps in a progressive direction.

Levels of Struggle

All our British experience points to the fact that a broad movement for peace strengthens, and does not weaken, the fight against imperialism, against capitalism.

Many of those who fought against war, during or immediately after the First World War, who started their struggles as pacifists or with limited approaches came, through their struggles, to understand and oppose imperialism, and then to join the Communist Party. Thousands of those who in the 1930's came first into a general struggle against war and fascism, not yet understanding the imperialist roots of war or the monopoly capitalist basis of fascism, came in the course of their struggles and through the work of Marxists, to deepen their understanding and to fight for socialism.

Many thousands of those who, in the fifties and sixties, started their struggles on such limited issues as against the bomb, have come to understand the need to fight against foreign military bases on British soil, to show solidarity with the national liberation movement, to fight for socialism.

It is quite wrong to counterpose the broad movement for peace, the movement against imperialism, the movement for socialism. The national liberation struggle and the widest possible support for it, is vital for the fight for peace. But the fight for peace cannot be made identical with the fight for national liberation in the sense of making support for the national liberation movement obligatory for the peace movement as a whole.

Communists in their own independent activities will always strive to rally the widest support, to develop the broadest solidarity, for the struggles of national liberation. They will also in their press, at their meetings, continuously explain the relations between imperialism and war, but they will not try to make this a condition for participation in the movement for peace. Indeed, as we have seen, it is precisely this broadest activity for peace that is often the first step, especially of young people, towards an understanding of and the fight against imperialism.

Socialism and Peace

The struggle for peace and the struggle for socialism are closely intertwined, inter-related.

It would be a horrible irony of history if, just at the moment when tempestuous advances of scientific knowledge open the prospect of a *rapid* solution of the problems of hunger and poverty and hardship that have haunted the world since

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the beginning of man, this same scientific knowledge was used by imperialism to destroy a great part of mankind and man's culture. It is only in the lands of socialism that modern technology can solve the needs of men and permit the transition to a communist society of abundance.

Only socialism will give the final guarantee of peace in the world, but the world needs peace as the most favourable background from which to advance to socialism.

Party building Prospects

Betty Matthews

"ENDLESS Struggle with Communism" was *The Times* headline to a debate in the House of Lords in November 1961. The title truly reflected the note of fear and hopelessness which characterised that debate. The not so noble Lords were sensing the winds of change from capitalism to communism on a world scale. Two years later, commenting on our recent National Congress last Easter, *The Times* thought that the Party might "soon become a force to be reckoned with". Here, too, was recognition of what is new and changing in our political scene.

That Congress was able to record an increase in membership of the Communist Party of nearly 10,000 in five years (38 per cent), and of 3,000 in the League (over 200 per cent). This growth is very significant, not because it yet represents a large numerical advance, but because it marks an important turn in the development of our Party. It reflects growth in understanding of the role of a Marxist Party and has been accompanied by greater consciousness of the necessity to participate in the electoral struggle, as the extension of contests in the local elections demonstrates.

Great Changes

What are the prospects for continued advance so that the Communist Party reaches a position where it combines mass support in industry and the organised labour movement with an electoral base in the councils and Parliament?

In what political and economic background are we battling for the development of the Communist Party? What conclusions can we draw from experience over the past years?

Before considering these questions, look for a moment on the past.

The struggle to give expression to the class interests of the workers through a political party and in Parliament has been long and tortuous. The working class began to take shape in organisational forms more than seventy years before the Labour Party emerged at the turn of the century, born under conditions of stress in imperialism and out of the revival of socialist ideas in the movement and the militant struggles of "new unionism". Its limited aim of securing working-class representation and an alternative government took decades to realise and it was not until 1945 that **there was the first Labour** ***majority*** in Parliament.

If the achievement of a mass electoral base and support has been difficult for the Labour Party, how much more of a battle is it for a revolutionary party with the aim of working-class power and socialism. Ideologically, we have to overcome the weight of capitalist ideas resisting social change. In practice, we have to contend with the problem of gaining a foothold in Parliament in competition with a party which is at present regarded as the main electoral expression of the labour movement. And this has to be fought for in an electoral system which is weighted in favour of the two major parties.

But great changes have been and are taking place, changes which objectively assist the struggle in Britain and create increased opportunities to win people for our aims and to advance communist support.

In contrast with the early part of this century, socialism is not only established in a number of countries, but is now rapidly overtaking capitalism economically. The more it proves its capacity to solve the problems of industry, science, housing, education, health, to raise living standards and to develop democracy, the greater the impact it will make on the minds of workers and of other sections in our country.

With the new relationship of class forces on a world scale, the possibilities exist for winning the struggle for peaceful coexistence and of advancing

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to socialism under these conditions. This line of development corresponds to the interests of millions in our country and hundreds of millions throughout the world and has great attractive power.

The Empire, the economic roots of the strength of right-wing social democracy in the labour movement, has been whittled down as a result of the national liberation struggles and the influence of socialism in the world. Weakened though it is, British imperialism is fighting every inch of the way to extract its "pound of flesh", as the various forms of neo-colonialism show. But it cannot regain its former position and this has economic and political repercussions on the class struggle in our country.

Technological development is accelerating and thus sharpening the contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production. It is hammering home the fact that economically Britain is overripe for social change.

The rapid growth of monopoly, so visible now to millions through the financial take-over bids of giant firms, the property deals of the Clores and Cottons, the operations of the Kings and Thomsons in the press, open up new possibilities to unite the vast majority of the people against monopoly capitalism and its party, the Tory party.

If these objectively favourable factors are to be grasped in order to advance the interests of the working class and all threatened by monopoly capitalism, the core of the problem is the development of the Communist Party into a mass party, with mass electoral support.

Such mass influence is indispensable if the progressive forces in the labour movement are to reject right-wing leadership and take the path of struggle for socialism. As John Gollan put it in his report to our Twenty-Seventh Congress:

> "Only the Communist Party has been a stable, continuous, consistent and developing revolutionary force in the labour movement. In contradiction to left movements, the Communist Party is an organised political party of the working class, its socialist party."

Such mass influence is a necessity if the struggle against capitalism is to reach the point envisaged in the *British Road to Socialism* where a Communist and Socialist majority forms a government which takes power from the ruling class.

Of course, this development of the Communist Party will not take place "all at one blow". Nor will it be easy. But the important thing is to move in the direction of a mass party, step by step.

What conclusions can we draw from the past years which, if consciously applied, can speed the advance of our Party?

Electoral Activity

That there is a close connection between regularly contesting in elections and building the Communist Party. It is not an accident that some of the best examples of growth are in constituencies where party branches have shown a serious attitude to elections over a period of time. For our electoral activity helps us to be seen as a political party with an *alternative policy* and a *programme of social change*. The fight for the policy and programme in elections speeds the process of changing the outlook of the people, because they are given not one aspect of what we stand for but an all-round answer to their problems and shown the full solution to them in socialism. This total presentation of our alternative is most important. In the course of a struggle, say on wages, rents or peace, workers taking part will agree with our policy on that particular question, but such agreement does not automatically alter their political position and allegiance. This is borne out by experience in many factories where trade unionists vote Communists on to Shop Stewards Committees and elect them as Convenors because of their outstanding service on wages and conditions, but when it comes to local and parliamentary elections, the majority still cast their votes for the Labour candidates.

The more systematic our participation in elections, the more we will build up an electoral base and attract people to our Party. In arguing the case for voting Communist, we are opening up the minds of electors to the need for the Communist Party and bringing them nearer the point of joining. If electoral activity speeds growth, in turn new growth increases the possibilities for extending the scale of contests. Such an extension is so important if we are to be seen as a real alternative.

The historical development in our country of Parliament, Councils and Political Parties gives special significance to this question of the connection between electoral advance and the growth of the Communist Party.

Does the emphasis the Party is placing on electoral activity hamper or help the building of our base in the factories? Some argue that it represents a turning away from the factories and tends to counterpose the electoral and the factory work. This is an incorrect position. Our electoral development can be of enormous assistance, provided it is coupled with detailed attention to the issues facing the workers in industry and to Communist factory organisation. A long-standing problem in industry is the tendency to economism, which affects not only the mass of the workers but our own members. Standing Communist candidates on a sufficiently wide scale to give large sections of the workers an opportunity to vote Communist and

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fighting for their support in the factories can accelerate the advance of political and socialist consciousness of the workers and strengthen our factory organisation numerically and in influence.

Politics and Industry

The importance of making the fight on policy for the labour movement a mass issue in industry and in the organisations of the working class. The current attempts of the right-wing leaders to "keep politics out of the trade unions"—a new version of the age-old subordination to capitalism—underlines the necessity of this if the labour movement is to challenge Toryism and advance its own interests. The strength of the right wing lies in its grip on the machine and in its influence on the thinking of workers as a result of years of social democracy. To break their grip, to transform the movement into a socialist movement, calls for a combination of fight on policy with leadership of struggle. The more this battle on policy becomes a mass question, and not restricted to the actives of the movement, the more favourable opportunities for building up a progressive alliance in the unions, which can challenge and defeat the right wing, and for helping workers to see that they need a vanguard party, the Communist Party.

Any thought on the character of this struggle on policy brings out the fact that it will succeed to the extent that the Communist Party grows in influence and numbers in industry. Our members and the *Daily Worker* are the force which introduces into the daily struggles the policy in the interests of the working class, the policy and leadership which help to unite and to build up the movement against the employers, the Tories and the right-wing leaders.

As long as there are survivals in our approach of the "Ginger group" conception of our Party, we are failing to take advantage of the opportunities to challenge reformist ideas and leaderships. It is a mass Communist Party that the industrial workers need if they are to advance their industrial and political interests—a party with organisation in thousands of factories and jobs in contrast to the hundreds at present.

Daily Worker

The need for a tremendous extension of the battle of ideas so that class and socialist outlook is spread widely among the workers and all sections of the people, especially through building a mass circulation of the Daily Worker.

Lenin pointed out how socialist consciousness has to be "injected" into the movement. This is a hundred times more important today. While it is true that the changes in the world and the country outlined earlier in this article, present more favourable opportunities for changing outlook, it is also true that the ruling class has strengthened its means of "thought control". Technical advances have produced TV which reaches the homes of millions. It is easier to get over propaganda by this means, since visual presentation of a question creates the impression that it must be true. At the same time there has been a rapid growth of press monopoly, with national and provincial papers going out of existence or being swallowed by the handful of press lords. And now the curtain is likely to come down on the *Daily Herald*.

The *Daily Worker* is much more than a newspaper. It is the bearer of working-class and socialist outlook every day to its readers. The fight for a mass circulation of the paper is bound up with the fight for a mass Communist Party.

The many trade union and other supporters of the paper and the members of our Party have faced up to every challenge to its existence in its thirty-three years history. They distributed it before the wholesalers would touch it. They defeated the ban during the war. By building the circulation and the fund they have defeated efforts of advertising monopolies and the government to smash it financially.

Now the challenge is to defeat the hope of the ruling class that its circulation should remain relatively small. So long as it does, the ruling class knows that with the help of right-wing social democracy they can maintain the *status quo*.

The key to advancing the paper is the closer association of the party branches and the *Daily Worker*. Any large-scale increase in circulation will not come automatically out of the fullest use of the existing distribution machine through wholesalers and newsagents. It has to be fought for, against the weight of capitalist influence and established attitudes to other newspapers.

While there is a growing appreciation in the Party, and amongst supporters, of the role of the *Daily Worker* as an indispensable working-class weapon, it is still partial. Our aim should be to reach a position where every branch of the Communist Party organises sales, both weekend and daily, where literally thousands of members make some contribution by taking extra copies to work or to the trade union branch and get discussion on the contents of the *Daily Worker*.

The fruits of such work are qualitative as well as quantitative. Those factories which have already established a large readership of the paper know its effect on class consciousness, on assisting unity and exposing right-wing disruption. An examination of recruiting in London and many districts shows how many members were first made readers

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of the paper. In fact the paper is a bridge to the Party.

Therefore the closer association between the Party and the paper, the more rapidly will both grow.

The *Daily Worker*, Marxist literature, our leaflets and our verbal propaganda, together form our armoury in the battle to change outlook. What a powerful armoury it is! The weakness at present is that it is not used widely enough. How can we change this?

Here, too, the electoral course the Party has decided on can be the means of breaking through. Widening the scale of our contests brings Communist policy into the homes of millions. Canvassing gives us the opportunity to introduce literature to thousands who have never seen a communist pamphlet, and experience in the Parliamentary constituencies where we have candidates underlines the potential for this, as for example the large sales of *World of Difference*. Similarly, organised sales of communist literature in the factories prove that there is an untapped interest in communism. The propaganda of the enemy is a double-edged weapon for them. It sows prejudice, but it also arouses interest. That interest grows as this present system demonstrates its inability to solve the problems of the workers and all the people.

In the changing political climate that we live in, greater scope is offered to present policy to other organisations, and to young people. Every time trade union branches are asked to receive a communist speaker on a particular subject of discussion in the movement, quite a number respond and a most valuable exchange of views takes place. Communist Party headquarters get a steady stream of requests for speakers on communism to youth and adult organisations. In London University some months ago over 500 came to hear lectures by our intellectuals. The success of *Marxism Today* forums and of public debates organised by the Young Communist League are further illustrations of interest.

There is a major channel barred to us, which, if opened up, could make an important difference to the mass spreading of our policy and consequently to winning support. The Party has still to win its rightful place in TV and radio, alongside the other political parties. It is not surprising there is resistance by the Establishment. Every time the General Secretary or other leading Communist has had a few minutes on this medium reports have come from far and wide of the favourable response and of its value in creating the real image of the Communist Party in place of the fifty-seven varieties of bogies usually served up.

Party Branches

Because branches in the factories and localities are the connecting link between the Party and the people, the means through which our policy is conveyed and our leadership expressed, the problem of building strong self-reliant branches is of paramount importance. There are three aspects of this question which call for treatment.

(1) *The development of more branches which are rooted among the people, champion their needs, have close ties with the organisations of the working class and of professional workers, and publicly present policy and our socialist alternative.*

There are many branches of this character, where our candidates, tenants and industrial leaders give outstanding service to the people. Their names are household words in a locality or industry. They are turned to for advice on issues —rent increases and threatened evictions, wages and conditions, education or peace. They command support and respect in their trade union, tenants' committee, or other organisation to which they belong.

Leadership of this kind is an indispensable factor in building up support, as an examination of Stepney, the Rhondda, Fife and other places where we have or are in sight of achieving communist representation on the councils bears out. However, this is not yet the pattern in all branches and in many we have yet to break away from a tendency to live in a closed circle, with activity directed inwards instead of outwards.

Where this is the case, we work with little knowledge of and contact with the people and with the local organisations, trade unions, labour parties, co-op, peace and others. Yet such contact and knowledge is a condition for building up the struggles against capitalism, for transforming the organised labour movement into a socialist movement, for attracting professional and other sections to our side.

Closeness to the needs of the people both helps in the development of struggle and in breaking down false ideas about what Communists are. Experience of how we serve their interests begins to defeat enemy propaganda. The contrast between what the enemy says and how the workers see the Communists in action becomes more clear and this is a necessary part of attracting them to the Party.

A blind spot in the work of branches is our failure to make a sustained appeal to young people. Behind it is surely a political underestimation of the role of youth in the struggle for socialism. Alongside the work of the League, Party branches should be developing our case to youth

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and taking an active interest in building up a branch of the Young Communist League in its localities and places of work.

The problem of changing the thinking of people and winning their support for the Communist Party and socialist ideas is one of combining *experience* of struggle with *learning* from that struggle. Branches need to fulfil *both* these functions if we are to put into practice the principles of a revolutionary party.

Where our branches are pitching into struggles, too often the struggle becomes everything. We neglect explanation of policy and do not open up a wider horizon in the minds of those taking part. This is why in so many struggles the trust that Communists have won is not paralleled with an advance in understanding of the Communist Party. In campaigning against the Tory Rent Act and housing shortage, not only should immediate demands be developed, but also the understanding that there is and can be a system of society without landlordism. Similarly, in fighting on wages and conditions, we should help workers to understand what exploitation is and how it can be ended. In the many facets of peace activity, we should deepen understanding of the causes of war and how socialism helps to end war for all time.

Debates sometimes take place in branches where this approach is raised and fear expressed that it will weaken the unity around the issue. Of course, our responsibility in a united action is to assist its unity and not to carry it further than the workers are prepared at a particular stage. Independently, the Party branch can and should make its policy public through leaflets, meetings, the *Daily Worker* and the local press. Unless policy is fought for and ideas of an alternative to capitalism introduced, those taking part cannot learn *all* the lessons of experience.

By greater attention to this function of our Party branches, we will speed the development of the Communist Party towards a mass party.

The need for this combination of struggle and propaganda has been an outstanding lesson in working-class history. Time and again there have been splendid struggles, some with gains, some with defeats. But the advance in class understanding has been limited at one stage by the absence of a Marxist party, and now by the insufficient size of the Party.

That is why building the Party branches is in the interests of the entire labour movement and a condition for throwing off the right-wing influence and leadership.

Branch Leadership

(2) *Strengthening the capacity of branch leaderships to take up the issues of the people, win support for our policy, and build the Communist Party and League.*

Leading the work of a branch is a complex, difficult question. Yet assistance of a character that advances understanding and capacity to lead is often the weakest point of the work of many higher committees. We are still too prone to paper leadership and to tolerating a situation where many capable members have only the most tenuous connection with a basic unit.

What gives added importance to this problem is the fact that a feature of the past two years has been the number of new members who now hold responsible positions in branches as secretaries, committee members, candidates. Their freshness and enthusiasm has helped to invigorate and transform branches. They have been an access of strength to the Party and proof of the value of recruiting. Their enthusiasm needs to be harnessed to deeper understanding of the theoretical basis of Marxism and training in leadership.

The pressure of events, the many-sided character of the class struggle, the difficulties in making headway—all these tend towards a situation where branches are so tied up in immediate tasks that they lack vision. Therefore, a central question in our political and educational work in branches is to develop understanding of the line of march contained in the *British Road to Socialism* and of the Marxist analysis from which it stems. Grasping its main ideas opens up perspective for the work of branches. The importance of mass struggle in the factories and labour movement, of winning professional and other sections, of consistent electoral activity, of advancing towards a mass party—the point and relationship of all these becomes clearer.

How necessary a firm theoretical basis at branch level is if influences which impede the Party from fulfilling its revolutionary role are to be combated has been proved on many occasions. In the period following 1956 the Party fought and defeated revisionist tendencies. Today expressions of leftism also need to be challenged and defeated if the Party is to exert the maximum influence on the working class.

Cultivating understanding of the need for the Communist Party is a problem which calls for systematic treatment if our Party branches are to grow. Branches will be built only to the extent that there is conscious sustained fight for new members to the Party and League. Up to the present a minority of members have been responsible for the gains. Once thousands are won to bring others into our ranks a very great change will take place in the size of each branch.

Strengthening the political capacity of a branch is not an internal matter but an interplay of experi-

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ence of struggle, the fight for policy and discussion on it. How to lead and how to establish firm ties with the people are therefore an integral part of the problems to tackle. There are branch leaderships which feel like a twentieth-century version of Atlas bearing the weight of world problems on their shoulders and the weight of the membership as well. This situation slows down response to the issues of the people and breeds resistance to further growth—"We will only have more to look after".

This position underlines the fact that leadership is a skilled job and has to be learnt.

A combination of direct assistance from leading committees with organised training is the way to grapple and overcome these difficulties. The fact that a start has been made on organised training over the past years is an important and welcome step, but it is only touching the fringe of the problem and needs improving in scope and in content. Its value is that it helps to generalise and draw conclusions from experience and enrich the approach of branch leaderships to such questions as: How to develop a campaign on an issue, how to work with other organisations, the public and electoral work of the Party, cultivating a rich and varied branch life and involving the membership, the branch plan, the individual and responsibility and collective work of the branch committee and so on.

Branch Life

(3) *Developing branch life so that every member is influenced and in turn contributes in some form to advancing the aims of the Party.* This is a complex question and there is no single magic answer. How does the problem express itself? A proportion of the branch membership is drawn into organised discussion through branch meetings and organised activity such as *Daily Worker* sales and leaflet distribution. The rest are often regarded as the "inactive members" and the ones you have to spoonfeed by calling round to collect dues and deliver literature. The many demands on the branch leadership foster this attitude of devaluing the membership. Absence of regular political influence on members is a major source in the avoidable losses which so reduce the rate of growth.

There are two points to have in mind in trying to approach this problem. We are a Marxist Party, based on the organisational principle of democratic centralism, which is the organisational form that can unite in policy and action masses of people in the struggle to change the system. Therefore, we need branches which are *organised* to influence people. Hence the importance of the branch meeting as a centre of political discussion, concerned with the issues facing the people, planning to implement our policy. But if this is looked on as the *sole* means of influencing our members, we are perpetuating tendencies to remain a small party. In our ranks there are trade unionists who are in contact with large numbers of workers, housewives who are well known to their neighbours, old age pensioners who lead the struggle of the pensioners, teachers and professional workers who command the respect of their associates.

Any knowledge of the actual situation, work, domestic or other problems which face many of our members soon shows that not *all* of them will or can become regular attenders at meetings, though more could be than at present.

Does that mean they are inactive or valueless? Surely not? Through the people they know and the organisations they belong to they can multiply the influence of the Party many times, and help it to become a mass party. To become a mass party we have to challenge ideas and attitudes which result in applying a very long measuring rod to each member and if they fall short to discount them. Such attitudes bar the road to growth.

The problem is how to help them to make a contribution to the fight for the Party's aims. If they work in isolation from the branch, they do not have the benefits of political discussion and in turn the branch does not know of the way they are influencing others.

Here the regular visiting of members in a branch is so important and if it is coupled with discussion, the sale of literature, the reading of the *Daily Worker*, these constitute a channel of political influence on the members.

In trying to develop this two-way approach to influencing members and people outside the Party, the organised planned activity of the branch and the direct ties, there needs to be a greater richness and variety in our conception of branch life than we have at present. This does not mean pursuing gimmicks. It does mean widening the range of questions we discuss, ridding meetings of routine, catering for the social needs of supporters, members and their children.

New Opportunities

Having been a small party for a long time and one which has faced up splendidly to the political struggle, it is understandable we have attitudes which result in expecting people to give all their time and of arguing for "quality not quantity". The point to grasp is that moving towards and becoming a mass party is not a *weakening* of a revolutionary party but a great strengthening of it, and a necessary development in the achievement of working-class power.

In conclusion, it is important to view these problems of advance in the context of the political

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situation. The third stage of the general crisis of capitalism is the background to the crisis of Tory policy on all fronts and the cause of it. The bastions of their system are crumbling. The ruling class faces increasing difficulties. Divisions in their ranks grow within this country and internationally. They are forced to knock down what has been built up, and to turn their backs on democracy. The fact that they have to rely increasingly on the aid of the right-wing Labour leaders is a sign not of strength but of the vulnerability of their position.

More and more the capitalist system is demonstrating its inability to solve the problems of the people and the necessity to struggle against it. Illusions fostered in the immediate post-war period about the stability of the system and of employment are being shattered. Half a million workers are without jobs and youngsters leaving school join those signing on at the labour exchange. Tenants face impossible rents and are threatened with eviction, while luxury Hilton-type hotels, flats and offices prove to all that the resources exist for solving the housing shortage. Industrial workers come up against a coalition of the Government, the employers and the right-wing labour leaders in their fight on wages and hours—a coalition which is overturning previously established practices of collective bargaining. Millions are opposed to Tory policy on the nuclear bomb, the American bases and the vast military expenditure. Parents and teachers join together to resist attacks on education. Professional sections, who previously gave allegiance to the Tory Party, now turn away from it.

While the development of the British working class has been slow and dominated by a reformist outlook, the situation is now compelling thousands to think in a way that they have not done in the past. For the accelerating crisis of capitalism and the increasing strength of socialism have brought us to the threshold of a new phase in our history.

A new period is opening up in the fight for social change. There are growing possibilities for introducing a socialist outlook into the labour movement, for weakening the grip of the right wing, for building the Communist Party and forging a progressive alliance. The right wing is very aware of this, as their vitriolic attacks bear witness.

The extent to which these possibilities are grasped depends on the growth of the Communist Party to the point where it becomes a mass party, with mass support in the factories, the councils and Parliament.

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Problems of the English Bourgeois Revolution

Some Reflections on the recent work of Christopher Hill

A. L. Merson

THE publication in 1961, in a popular series likely to be widely used by history teachers, sixth-formers and university students, of a text-book on English seventeenth-century history by Christopher Hill is an important event. The purpose of this article is to make some comments suggested by a reading of *The Century of Revolution* 1603-1714 and of Hill's other recent work.

Hill did much, from about 1938, to make known Marx and Engels's interpretation of the English Revolution and to restate and elaborate it in the light, not only of the recent researches of British and American historians, but also of Soviet historical writings which might otherwise have remained almost unknown in Britain. This early work was summed up in the brilliant tercentenary essay *The English Revolution* 1640 which first appeared in 1940 and was reissued with minor revisions in 1955. Challenging the then orthodox version of the revolution as a struggle about religious and constitutional issues unconnected with class divisions and class interests (*The Puritan Revolution*), Hill roundly declared :

> "The state power protecting an old order that was essentially feudal was violently overthrown, power passed into the hands of a new class, and so the freer development of capitalism was made possible. The civil war was a class war . . ."

This interpretation involved rejecting the notion which had previously been entertained by some Marxists as well as by bourgeois liberal historians, that the feudal ruling class had lost power in England after the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century and that the Tudor monarchy represented the power of the middle class directed against feudal barons and feudal church. With this was rejected the Soviet historian M. N. Pokrovsky's analogous idea that absolute monarchy corresponded to a special stage of "merchant capitalism". In Hill's essay the monarchy of the Tudors and Early Stuarts in England was defined as feudal or semi-feudal absolutism, a form of state fundamentally similar to the absolute monarchies of the Continent in that it represented a reorganised and centralised form of the state power of the feudal land-owning class in the era of peasant revolt and bourgeois challenge.

Class Content of English Revolution

If this thesis contained "crudities and oversimplifications" (to quote the author's preface to the 1955 edition), this was to some extent inevitable in the state of historical knowledge at that time, since many of the questions raised by a Marxist approach to the English Revolution had not yet been thoroughly studied. Further clarification was needed, especially of two problems : the role of ideology and the analysis of class relations. If puritanism was to be regarded as the ideology of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, how did it come to be jettisoned in the settlement of 1660 ? How were the religious strands in bourgeois thought related to the secular, Erastian, legal strands ? Was not science, too, a product of developing capitalism and a feature of the emerging bourgeois outlook ? And were not the scientific and puritan movements ultimately incompatible ?

The second major problem was that of defining accurately the class content of the revolution. The English Revolution of 1640-60 did not replace the rule of the feudal aristocracy by that of the bourgeoisie in anything like so clear and obvious a way as, for instance, the French Revolution of 1789. The rulers of England after 1660, as before 1640, were a landowning aristocracy whose membership survived the revolutionary period with surprising continuity and closed again the ranks which the civil war had divided. Because of this the Marxist contention that the revolution represented the seizure of power by a new class has never commanded even that grudging degree of assent which many non-Marxists have accorded to a similar view of the French Revolution. It has seemed to lack plausibility and to involve either straining the meaning of terms or inconsistencies in their use. The heart of the problem

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has lain in defining the character of the progressive gentry which has sometimes been described as part of the bourgeoisie, sometimes as an ally of the bourgeoisie in a conflict with the "feudal lords", and then again as part of a single gentry class. It was on this point that some of the formulations in *The English Revolution* 1640 seemed to need refinement, perhaps even revision. To say, as Hill did, that in seventeenth-century England, unlike eighteenth-century France, economic classes did not correspond to social and legal classes did not solve the problem. How big really *was* the difference between bourgeois landlords and feudal landlords in the seventeenth century ?

Role of Ideology

On the first of these problems — the role of ideology in the English Revolution — Hill has since 1955 thrown new light from a Marxist viewpoint in a number of distinguished works : *Economic Problems of the Church* (1956); *Puritanism and Revolution,* a collection of essays and articles (1958); and the six Ford lectures on *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* which were published in *The Listener* in May-July 1962. The most striking feature of these contributions, as of *The Century of Revolution,* is their ingenuity in tracing interactions between different elements of the superstructure and the economic base. They sparkle with hints and illustrations of unsuspected links and cross-currents, demonstrating the rich possibilities of the dialectical method in the hands of a gifted and learned exponent. Often an interpolated question, a well-chosen quotation, suggests a whole new line of enquiry. The complex interrelations of puritanism and anti-clerical erastianism, for instance, are subtly explored: they emerge as variants rather than opposites. Even sabbatarianism is found to be no simple phenomenon. In it

> " . . . employers who wished for regular labour, prentices who wanted a chance to talk theology and politics, Justices and judges who disliked the brawls and bastards produced by church ales, could all unite with Puritans who took the Bible literally."

Puritanism and science, too, are shown to be connected in many ways :

> " Science and puritanism grew up side by side in the urban centres, with support from some gentlemen, but deeply-rooted in the middle and lower-middle classes . . . a link between puritanism, science and history is the emphasis on experience, experiment rather than authority, on things rather than words, on the test of the senses and the heart against intellectual exercises . . ."

This theme is developed at greater length in the *Intellectual Origins,* which also breaks new ground in a discussion of the complicated and still obscure process by which the old feudal common law came to supply an important element in the ideology of the bourgeois revolution. Coke's importance, Hill says, is twofold: he "systematised English law and in the process continued and extended the process of adapting it to the needs of a commercial civilisation"; and he "gave Englishmen a historical myth of the English constitution parallel to Foxe's myth of English religion".

Class Relations

The striking new contributions which Hill has made to the study of the ideological aspects of the English Revolution — of which these samples give only a very inadequate impression — are not matched by equal advances in the analysis of class relations. True, he continues to put the class struggle in the centre of the story and so, incidentally, to earn the patronising gibes of reviewers like Dr. G. R. Elton in the *New Statesman,* who found it "idiosyncratic" of Hill in *The Century of Revolution* "to put the people in the forefront of every issue", adding with unconscious self-revelation that "the constant denunciation of propertied men's doings excites in the reader an exasperation with the poor which at least puts him in tune with the seventeenth-century ruling classes". Marxists on the other hand will appreciate the many passages in which Hill illustrates the class realities of politics with a clarity rarely found in British history textbooks. For instance :

> " There was no police-force in Stuart England, no standing army. In normal times law and order were preserved by depriving the mass of the population of arms. Those entitled to bear arms — the *armigeri* — were the landed class. 'The gentry' said Sir Walter Raleigh, 'are the garrisons of good order throughout the realm.' A naked basis of force underlay social relations . . ." (*Century of Revolution,* pp. 27-8)

The civil war, however, put weapons in the hands of the people and it was their intervention that both ensured the victory of Parliament and determined the course towards compromise afterwards:

> " Fear of possible seduction of the lower orders into social and political heresy underlay the paranoiac opposition to religious toleration in the 1640's. Both Charles and the Parliamentary leaders expected this social anxiety to bring the other side to accept their terms in the Civil War. We shall often misinterpret men's thoughts and actions if we do not continually remind ourselves of this background."
>
> (*Century of Revolution,* p. 28)

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He concludes with this summary of the outcome of the struggle:

> "The men of property won freedom — freedom from arbitrary taxation and arbitrary arrest, freedom from religious persecution, freedom to control the destinies of their country through elected representatives, freedom to buy and sell. They also won freedom to evict copyholders and cottagers, to tyrannise over their villages, to hire unprotected labour in the open market . . . The smaller men failed in all spheres to get their freedom recognised, failed to win either the vote or economic security . . . Freedom is not something abstract. It is the right of certain men to do certain things . . . Only very slowly and late have men come to understand that unless freedom is universal it is only extended privilege. 'If the common people have no more freedom in England', Winstanley asked, 'but only to live among their elder brothers and work for them for hire, what freedom have they in England more than we have in Turkey or France?" By the end of our period, the Good Old Cause was dead; the organisation of trade unions was just beginning . . . " (*Century of Revolution*, p. 310)

In this and other fine passages we recognise again the Marxist insight of Hill's earlier work, with the familiar wealth of apt quotation and the subtlety of phrase. But there is one noticeable difference. The occasional slightly awkward or indigestible formulations of the earlier essay have been eliminated—and this has been done by the simple method of dropping certain terms. Words like "bourgeoisie," "petty bourgeoisie", "feudal gentry", now rarely if ever occur; instead, the same kind of analysis is suggested rather than expressed by the cunning use of quotation and of contemporary words such as "freeholder", "freeman", "the many-headed monster." The term *bourgeois revolution* itself is not used; and, perhaps significantly, *The English Revolution* 1640 is not listed among the Books for Further Reading.

Is this elimination of Marxist technical terms justifiable as a concession to the requirements of a popular series? Does it, perhaps, while avoiding "the kind of crude or doctrinaire thesis which has to do violence to the facts in order to impose itself" (to quote a sympathetic reviewer) yet achieve the substances of a Marxist analysis of class relations? Or is it a retreat from Marxism, resulting from failure to solve actual historical problems brought to light by the difficulties encountered in initial attempts to apply Marxist concepts to the complex material of English history?

The Progressive Landowners

It may help to answer this if we look more closely at his treatment of the specially difficult but vital question of the role of the progressive landowners. Marx put it thus:

> "In 1648 the bourgeoisie was allied with the new nobility against the monarchy, against the feudal nobility, and against the established church. In 1789 the bourgeoisie was allied with the people against monarchy, nobility and established church."
>
> ". . . the riddle of the conservative character of the English revolution is explained by the lengthy alliance between the bourgeoisie and a considerable section of the great landowners, an alliance, that essentially distinguishes the English revolution from the French revolution, which destroyed large landed property by parcelling out the soil. This class of large landowners, thus linked with the bourgeoisie, had originated under Henry VIII; unlike the French feudal landowning class of 1789, it did not find itself in conflict but rather in complete harmony with the conditions of life of the bourgeoisie. For land-ownership of this class was not a feudal but a bourgeois form of property."
>
> (quoted in C. Hill, 'The English Civil War interpreted by Marx and Engels', *Science and Society*, winter 1948, pp. 136, 149.)

Hill makes the same point in these words:

> "The seventeenth-century English Revolution is often, and fruitfully, compared with the French Revolution of 1789. But there is one important difference. In France economic and political divisions roughly corresponded with social: the unprivileged Third Estate opposed aristocracy and monarchy; the aristocracy took no part in trade and industry. But in England wool, cloth and agricultural production for the market split the ruling class itself: many gentlemen and even peers engaged in economic activities which would have been impossible for a French noble. 'The landowner living on the profits and rents of commercial farming' concludes Professor Tawney 'and the merchant or banker who was also a landowner, represented not two classes but one. Patrician and parvenu both owed their ascent to causes of the same order. Judged by the source of their incomes, both were equally bourgeois'. The division in England is not Third Estate *versus* gentry and peerage, but country *versus* court . . ."
>
> (*Century of Revolution*, p. 102)

This passage is typical of many. With felicitous phrases and apt quotation it conveys the gist of Marx's class analysis, but it does not substantially extend or refine it. If Marx's terms seem blunt, that is surely because we have made so little progress in elucidating the problems he posed. The main task of English seventeenth-century history now is to analyse the mode of production, to study and measure the development of capitalist production relations and, in particular, to study the processes by which the feudal gentry developed into bourgeois landlords, the feudal peasantry into bourgeois, petty bourgeois and

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proletarians. It seems clear that the feudal landowning class was transformed into a bourgeois landowning class over a considerable period of time and in a number of stages, and that sections of the class lagged behind others in the process, so that at times some sections were revolutionary and others counter-revolutionary. Yet the unity of the landowning class constantly tended to reassert itself. If we underestimate the split in the gentry we cannot explain the revolution of 1640; if we exaggerate it, we cannot understand the Restoration of 1660. The process was complex and much work still needs to be done to define and date the stages. Many of the problems involved were clearly posed in Maurice Dobb's *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (1946) —a basic and challenging work which other Marxist historians have been more prone to praise than to follow up with research work.

Some lines of enquiry have been suggested by Hill himself and by others.[1] We need comparative studies of conservative and progressive sections of the gentry, starting perhaps with individual landowners for whom evidence has survived, with special reference to their interests in mining or cloth-making, commerce or colonisation, and to the nature of their activities as landowners. To what extent did they engage directly in production for the market? In what respects did their rental income approximate to capitalist ground rent rather than to feudal rent? Many of the questions about the development of capitalism consist in the need to define points at which quantitive changes became qualitative. Just as the landowner's transformation from feudal lord to bourgeois landlord came when his income began to consist predominantly of rent paid by capitalist farmers or of the proceeds of his own capitalist production rather than of the old type of rents, dues and services, so, as Dobb has pointed out, the peasant became a capitalist farmer when the importance of hired labour in his operations began to outweigh the work of his family and when he began to relate his gains to his capital rather than to his own exertions.

Such transitions are not often easy to measure from surviving evidence and the current fashion for statistics has tended to divert attention to questions for which numerical evidence is more easily obtained (e.g. "the counting of manors"). But impressive answers are of little use if the question is wrongly framed. Perhaps the way forward lies through selective studies of particular estates for which evidence exists to study the disintegration of the peasantry, the development of capitalist agriculture and the financial transactions of the landlord, rather than in premature attempts to compile comprehensive figures. One line of enquiry that does not seem to have been followed up is that pioneered by Dr. E. Kerridge in an article of 1953 (*Economic History Review* 2nd ser. Vol. VI, No. 1) which seemed to show that the rents of some at least of the great landlords were already by 1680 much more closely related to the profits of commercial farming than used to be thought. Another line is suggested by Professor Tawney's analysis of a Gloucestershire muster roll of 1608 (*ibid.* 1934) which yielded at least a rough estimate of the proportion of hired labourers to farmers in agriculture. Is there really no comparable evidence for other dates and counties?

Further Problems

Comparative studies of different regions are also needed. It is often said that the North and West were economically and socially backward compared to the "progressive" South and East until the Revolution of 1640-60 stimulated the spread of commercial farming (and, therefore, presumably of capitalist relations and bourgeois landlordism) through the activities of sequestration committees, parvenu landgrabbers and returning royalists hard pressed by debt. This is an attractive hypothesis which helps to explain the alignment in the civil war and the reunification of the landed class after 1660; but the evidence for it has never been fully assembled.

More work is also needed on industrial development, especially on the development of capitalism in those branches of industry in which the small-scale unit and primitive technical methods continued to prevail. This needs to be studied with reference to the two main lines of development noted by Marx — the extension of the merchant's control over the small producers whose wares he dealt in, and, on the other hand ("the really revolutionary way") the emergence of employers from the ranks of the craftsmen themselves. Here again the development of capitalism is a matter of small quantitative changes which at some point amount to qualitative change. Precise definition and dating of stages can only be approached through more careful studies of particular industries.

Finally, we shall need, through such studies, to aim at measuring more precisely the changes which took place in class relations in the seventeenth century. The picture yielded by the Gloucestershire muster roll of 1608 is that of a society of petty commodity producers in which hired labour still played a very subordinate role. Gregory King in 1688 described an essentially

[1] See *Puritanism and Revolution*, pp. 25-9; also B. Manning in *Past and Present* No. 5.

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capitalist society in which the majority of the population was propertyless. Must we conclude that these 80 years saw a vital qualitative change? Or are the two pictures not comparable? Present evidence scarcely permits us to decide.

Levellers

The imprecise state of our knowledge about the development of the mode of production during the seventeenth century seems to be at the root of a certain confusion which has developed about the Leveller movement. In his *The English Revolution* 1640 Hill gave an excellent account of the contradictions in this movement, which he related to the social position of the petty bourgeoisie, then in process of stratification. "The Leveller ideal," he summed up, "was a small-producer Utopia in economics and petty-bourgeois in politics" but "despite the focus of the Army, the Levellers never represented a sufficiently homogeneous class to be able to achieve their aims . . ." For, if some of the richer yeomen and artisans were prospering and pushing their way up into the bourgeoisie and gentry, many more were being squeezed down to the status of landless agricultural labourers. The events of the Civil War speeded up this process . . . This conception, which seems to the present writer to be fundamentally correct, still underlies most references to the Levellers in *The Century of Revolution*, where they are said to have "expressed the outlook of men of small property, the artisan, yeoman and husbandmen majority of the population" (p.132). In a passage about the Putney Debates, however, (pp. 130-131) Hill introduces certain formulations which appear to be the result of last-minute revision and to be inconsistent with his other assessments of the Levellers. They were not, he now argues, as democratic as we used to think. "Their proposals would perhaps have doubled the number of men entitled to vote. But manhood suffrage would have quadrupled it." Although "some Levellers spoke as if they were in favour of manhood suffrage", their emphatic statements to that effect at Putney are to be taken as "rhetorical flourishes". Cromwell and Ireton also "pretended at Putney that the Levellers were more democratic than they were". Traditional views on the Levellers, he adds will be "drastically revised" by Professor C. B. Macpherson's *Possessive Individualism*, on which these new assessments are based.

Professor Macpherson's book, which was noticed in this journal in January, 1963, is mainly devoted to a re-examination, from a Marxist point of view, of the political thought of Hobbes, Harrington and Locke. Their ideas, it is argued, can only be properly understood if one realises that they were thinking in terms of a society in which labour power was a commodity, that is, an essentially capitalist society. If the Levellers' statements about the franchise are viewed in the same light, he goes on to say, their exclusion of servants and beggars appears to be much more significant than has hitherto been supposed. The Levellers themselves said that "the reason why we would exclude apprentices, or servants, or those that take alms, is that they depend upon the will of other men and should be afraid to displease them", and it has usually been thought that this exception was not of great importance in their thinking and was directed against the rich rather than the poor. But if, as Macpherson insists, those who had thus "forfeited their birthright" are to be regarded not as a minority more or less temporarily disqualified, but as a majority permanently excluded, then the whole thought of the Levellers begins to take on a rather different complexion. They were precursors of bourgeois individualism but not of modern democracy.

Professor Macpherson's Thesis

This thesis needs to be examined with care. It is not only about political thought but about the nature of English society in the seventeenth century, and although Professor Macpherson's arguments are powerful, some of the premises of historical fact on which they are based seem open to question. He starts from Gregory King's estimates of the class and income structure of the English population in 1688 which place a majority of the population in the categories of "labouring people and outservants, cottagers and paupers", servants living in, common seamen, etc. All these people, Macpherson maintains, were regarded as either servants or almstakers in the seventeenth century. He, therefore, proceeds to calculate, after making careful adjustments for a smaller population in 1648 and for special treatment for soldiers, that the Leveller proposals involved excluding from the franchise approximately 65 per cent of adult males.

Several possible objections to this argument may be briefly indicated here. The first concerns the definition of a "servant". Professor Macpherson states categorically that "the term servant in seventeenth-century England meant anyone who worked for an employer for wages, whether the wages were by piece-rates or time-rates, and whether hired by the day or week or by the year" and he takes it for granted that the Levellers would have excluded from the franchise all those whom King later classified as "labouring people and outservants". But is this certain? The stages by which the nominally independent craftsmen shaded into the dependent wage-worker were

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numerous. Clothiers might put out work to hundreds: but were these their servants? Not in the language of the Gloucestershire muster-roll of 1608 or of similar documents which apparently listed as servants only apprentices or servants living in their master's household.

Gregory King himself appears on occasion to use the word "servant" loosely when he means "in-servant". There is, at least, a legitimate doubt about what exactly the Levellers meant by "servant" and what degree of dependence would have qualified a craftsman or cottager for inclusion. A similar doubt attaches to the category of "almstakers". There is growing evidence that a majority of Englishmen in the seventeenth century lived at or below the "poverty-line". But this may not mean that the poor were all servants or beggars, still less that the Levellers thought that the majority would be servants or almstakers in a society in which their reform programme had been carried out.

Objection may also be raised to Professor Macpherson's explicit assumption that, although the total population of England may have been rather smaller in the time of the Levellers, about 1648, than it was in 1688, the proportions of servants and almstakers was the same. This is to take too static a view of English society in the seventeenth century, and it may be argued that the thought of the Levellers — and the contradictions in it — can only be understood against the background of a society that was rapidly changing. Hill states in *The Century of Revolution* that the number of those permanently dependent on wages was increasing; but, in the earlier part of the century at least, he still speaks of a majority of artisans, husbandmen and yeomen. A similar picture emerges from Tawney's analysis of the Gloucestershire muster roll of 1608, in which labourers and servants amount to at most 25 per cent of the population and are mostly concentrated on a small number of big farms and estates, while most industrial units and most farms were family businesses employing no adult male servant. And although this may for several reasons contain an underestimate of the importance of hired labour, it still seems arguable that England in the seventeenth century was only in process of transition from a pre-capitalist society in which the majority were propertyless servants or almstakers. The Levellers had no figures like King's. They are more likely to have been thinking in terms of a social order that was passing away than of one still incompletely developed; in terms of 1608 rather than 1688. They are likely, too, to have been thinking in terms of town communities, in which the struggle for democracy had a long history and in which the proportion of proletarians may have been smaller than in the countryside at this time, except perhaps in London — a big exception in this context. Their programme, finally, contained demands which would have maintained and perhaps increased the preponderance of petty production and the opportunities for apprentices and servants to become masters.

Further Study Needed

It still seems easier to make sense of the Levellers' ideas on the traditional assumption that they were thinking in terms of a largely pre-capitalist society of small producers. Their exclusion of servants can then be interpreted as a measure primarily aimed (as they said it was aimed) at a small number of rich men, who might otherwise have been able to control twenty or thirty votes. Again, if they were thinking in terms of a society in which servants were still not an entirely separate class and were often only temporarily under the control of a master, it is easier to explain why their spokesmen apparently attached so little importance to the disfranchisement of servants and took so little pains to justify what would otherwise have been in glaring contradiction to their very sweeping and emphatic assertions of the right of every man to have a voice in choosing the government he lived under. Was not their very failure due (as Hill argued in his 1940 essay) to the fact that they thought in terms of a society that was rapidly passing away, so that their potential support disintegrated? The argument cannot be concluded in the present state of our knowledge. The important thing is to insist that the ideas of the Levellers, like the divisions in the gentry, must be seen in relation to social relations that were *changing* and this demands careful study of the complex processes of growth of the capitalist mode of production.

We need, not only to manipulate King's tables, but also to follow up George Unwin's analysis of the development of capitalist relations within the framework of the London gilds and to trace in detail the processes by which the workers in one craft after another became subordinated to a capitalist merchant or to a rising employer from their own ranks. Similarly, we need more studies of the development of capitalism in agriculture. Our knowledge of the superstructure of English society in the seventeenth century has been notably advanced by the recent work of Christopher Hill; what is now needed is renewed study of the economic base. And as evidence accumulates we shall need, not to scrap our Marxist categories, but to refine them until they can accommodate the facts.

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Discussion contribution on:

What Does Music Express?

Jane Corbett

ALAN BUSH'S article on *What Does Music Express*? is packed full of closely reasoned arguments, difficult to cover by correspondence, but there are a few reservations.

In answer to the question put by the title, Alan Bush sums up by saying that Marxism would give the answer: "The effect of a work of art is to interest the consumer in the subject of the work and to mould his feeling in regard to the particular matter which is being reflected".

This axiom seems to me to be too limited. The quotation from Schönberg's essay "Music speaks in its own language of purely musical matters—or perhaps—as most aestheticians believe, of matters of feeling and fantasy" seems a reasonable statement, if the word "also" is substituted for "or perhaps".

Many Facets

In fact, music, like other arts, has many facets. Sometimes, allied with words, it has the clearest and most powerful expression of human subjects that it is possible to experience. Apart from words, it can in general terms portray (as Stravinsky often does, although he says he cannot!) sorrow, joy, compassion and other shades of common emotion.

It can have a utility value to support dancing, co-ordinated work or ceremonial rites. Or it can be patterns of organised sound, such as the magnificently inventive 48 Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach, which either individually please, irritate, or fail to interest at all.

Varieties of musical desires may be satisfied with all these aspects of art in sound, or may reject one or more species as uninteresting or definitely revolting.

Can we not accept this diversity and expect our composers to provide, as they are individually able, all these requirements—and more? (Covering possible technical developments in the reproduction of sound).

That vocal cords in birds, animals and human beings first produced sounds, and later, melodies, was one of the long, wonderful evolvements of life necessary for survival, and Alan Bush's explanation of this in a very few words is quite terrific, although definitely to assert that "primitive worksong is no doubt the first music which man created" is being somewhat dogmatic, and especially unreasonable as he proceeds to expound an important theory on this assertion.

Personally, I prefer the supposition (which is all it can be), that imitation of animal noises could have been one of the earliest uses of the voice, to facilitate hunting.

National Characteristics?

The argument against cosmopolitanism in musical idiom does not seem quite valid, nor can it be exactly equated with the national choice of literary language. Very few British composers' education (or social consciousness, in some cases) can have been confined to experience of English backgrounds only.

In fact, quite the contrary. Especially as regards musical training, which is normally almost entirely based on the study of foreign music up to the end of the 19th century (with the exception of the 16th century, which in its turn was influenced by Italian methods).

Thereafter followed such composer models as Elgar, Parry, Delius, Stanford, Bax, Holst, Boughton, Walton, Britten and others. Only Stanford and Vaughan Williams consciously used *some* folk music development in their *major* works.

National characteristics, or intonations, in music *will* merge into something more international in due course, as science inevitably brings all peoples into closer social environments. Surely Marxists must endeavour always to link science with the humanities, and not allow one to fall behind the other.

Music should be man's ally in this, and to suggest development of English, Scottish and Welsh schools of music at this point of history, except for research purposes, seems to me a backward step.

Composers who can communicate their ideas best in a nationalistic intonation at present must sincerely continue to do so, but those who prefer to use a wider range should not have limits imposed upon them, or be considered some kind of musical heretic.

The present pre-occupation with serial tech-

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niques is most probably in line with abstract visual art, reflecting reaction from the confused social values of our time. It *can* absolve the artist from stating a point of view, avoids controversy about the subject and reduces blood pressure. However, this negative attitude cannot satisfy a Marxist, who endeavours always to admit a problem, discuss it and possibly solve it then, or later.

Young Marxist composers will gather, as the tools of their trade, all new technical developments and may *eventually* come forward with the proposition that national trends in music be abandoned, as historically necessary, but no longer progressive.

New cosmopolitan techniques will be evolved, controlled and moulded to express a modern international musical art.

Logic and Meaning of Life

John Lewis

RAYMOND SOUTHALL'S logical analysis of the sense of beauty (he will not like this phrase I fear!) in the September issue begins with a challenge to the critical atittude which most Marxists take to the main trend of bourgeois philosophy in this period of capitalist disintegration. This challenge is worth taking up because it goes right to the heart of the chief ideological conflict of today. The rest of the article I am not at the moment concerned with; my criticism however would follow the line of my response to his challenge.

It was thirty years ago that a new approach to philosophy appeared which has swept through the British universities, questioning all serious thinking about the nature of existence and the meaning of life. The professional philosophers now leave severely alone great tracts of traditional philosophical territory, and confine themselves to answering questions that seem to have no relevance at all to the problems of man's life, his moral well-being and his destiny on this earth. As G. J. Warnock puts it: "They would wish to say that philosophy has nothing to do with questions of that kind."[1]

"Philosophical Analysis"

This new thinking was at first known as "logical positivism or empiricism", and more recently as "philosophical analysis". Southall says we are "wrong in asserting that analysis is a philosophy". He means that it has taken the place of philosophy, by demonstrating that such questions as materialism versus idealism, the problem of "matter, life and mind", the existence of the supernatural, the validity of religion, the possibility of a philosophy of history, the reality of the material world, are in the nature of things incapable of being answered, either because no answer can be verified experimentally, or because a strict analysis of the question shows that they have no meaning.

If this is the case then the attempt of philosophy to consider human beings and human life in some wider and meaningful context is of course a futile one. As Bertrand Russell says: "This is rejected by the philosophers who make logical analysis the main business of philosophy. They confess frankly that the human intellect is unable to find conclusive answers to many questions of profound importance to mankind", even though the actions of men "in innumerable important respects, have depended upon their theories as to the world and human life. . . . This is as true in the present day as at any former time."[2]

This is what is meant by the rejection of metaphysics (i.e. the basic question of the nature of existence) and by declaring that the new way of tackling these basic questions is *not* a philosophy.

Marxists, and many other philosophers reject this view, in spite of the fact that they have always known that speculative philosophy has from time to time propounded questions which are, by their very nature, incapable of solution, meaningless or nonsensical. There is real gain in removing such questions from the field of argument, but the sweeping negativism of the analytical school is a case of emptying out the baby with the bath water. Many philosophical statements are meaningful and important. We contend that there are good reasons for accepting the world of nature as comprising the whole of reality and for rejecting supernaturalism. We believe that we have a

[1] G. J. Warnock. *English Philosophy since* 1900.

[2] Bertrand Russell. *A History of Western Philosophy.*

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rational solution of the body-mind problem, that we can explain and justify moral values, that a philosophy of history is possible, that we can say something of significance about the meaning of life. In other words we have a philosophy.

But so have the analysts! Imagining that they have rejected metaphysics, in fact their very position is highly metaphysical. This wholesale rejection of the very possibility of discussing the basic problem of human existence is itself a philosophical position of great complexity. Indeed what we have here is an example of the answer to a considerable range of philosophical questions masquerading as a simple logical rejection of linguistic errors. Many philosophers have pretended to provide philosophical theories while in reality they have merely talked nonsense. Analysis is one way of pretending to talk sense while in fact conveying speculations of the widest scope.

Why This Reluctance?

But this raises a further question: Why is it that in our age thinkers in every field—in political theory, in the philosophy of history, in every question concerning the nature and destiny of man, are suddenly reluctant to ask fundamental questions? They were not so when capitalism was in the ascendant. They are so now it is in decline, and an objective scientific enquiry into society and its development reveals the imminence, the necessity of socialism. Is it not because all those whose interests are really or supposedly tied to a decaying civilisation, want to believe at this stage in the essential incomprehensibility of things? This is why I described the new philosophy as rationalising its own refusal to think things through; as diverting thought from dangerous problems under the cloak of sharpening the logical instrument.

Very closely associated with this *contraction* of thinking, this highly reductive metaphysic, is the limitation of knowledge to immediate experience —to sensations, so that the material world is not directly known but is regarded as a precarious inference from subjective experience. In his first book Professor Ayer accepted this position, and many logical positivists with him. He has since rejected it, but again and again, in one form or another, it reveals itself as implied in the philosophy of logical empiricism. (Lenin saw this and brilliantly refuted it in his *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*). This view is based on the misconception that the mind knows itself and its own experiences more easily and more certainly than it knows material objects; and therefore leads to the rejection of explanatory theories, *and even material realities* such as atoms and molecules, which lie behind the surface of events and data which are actually observed. This is to cut the nerve of science and to deny reason in the name of logic in its most limited range.

It is this position which I criticise as "making the experiences of the physical world subjective" —that is to say limiting knowledge to mental events.

Subjectivism

Of course we only know the external world *through* sensations, but it is an elementary fallacy to imagine that because that is so we only know sensations and merely *infer* material objects. Because we cannot think of a chair without having an idea of the chair, that doesn't mean that we can only know the idea! Southall says that this straight-forward naturalistic theory of perception is "a travesty of Marxism". On the contrary to limit knowledge to experiences, to sensations, and what logic can do in the way of juggling with them, is not honest, down-to-earth, realism. It opens the door to pure subjectivism, to religious and other illusory experiences. It implies indeed philosophical idealism, since it accepts the reality only of mental events and questions the objectivity of the material world. It carries us irresistibly to scepticism, the denial of science, the denial of a philosophy of man and history, to the very negation of reason itself—and is therefore, fundamentally a rejection of Marxism.

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Children in a Changing World

Jean Feldmar

DR. CARRITT's article in the July issue of *Marxism Today* is a welcome statement from an authoritative source as to what can be done to help children in need. I believe her report gives a somewhat over-optimistic picture, and that at present work of the kind she describes is done only by the best school medical officers, working with the most co-operative teachers, and for the most progressive local education and health authorities. Even so, there are few local authorities or people working in this field, of any political colour, who would not agree that these things *should* be done. This seems to suggest that the whole subject is "non-political".

In considering the needs of the handicapped or disabled, or of any of the casualties of our society, it is beyond controversy that vigilance, early detection and diagnosis, and treatment, are essential. Even the most reactionary authorities will, under pressure, rehouse a family who have got into difficulties and become an expense to the rates. In socialist society such provisions will still be necessary, so measures of the kind described by Dr. Carritt to some extent at present lie outside the arena of political conflict.

Practical Politics

But if we move a step forward and seek to use the knowledge gained from study of the casualties to satisfy the needs of the normal child, in order to prevent him from becoming a casualty, we find ourselves right inside the political arena. Not only are immediate, practical politics involved, but also the deeper and more complex questions of the relationship between the individual and society.

The study of maladjusted children frequently shows that in early life their relationship to their mother is disturbed or unsatisfactory. This could be due to prolonged separation—but in many cases it is because the mother herself was unhappy and frustrated. It is reasonable to conclude that the normal child needs a close relationship with his mother (or a substitute person) who is herself leading a satisfactory personal and social life.

It has also been established that freedom for noisy, messy and aggressive play is of benefit to the maladjusted child. Bearing in mind also that most healthy children enjoy this sort of play, it is fairly obvious that this also is an elementary need of the normal child.

Let us consider the practical politics involved in attempting to satisfy these two elementary needs. It is not just a question of better wages and housing. The young mother of two or more small children living miles away from her former "extended family" may find it very difficult to live what she feels to be a satisfactory social life. She can go only where she can take a pram and a toddler, cannot go out with her husband in the evenings, has to spend a large part of her time with no adult companionship doing work which many women find boring. Money can help by paying baby-sitters, and a lot of money can buy her a car of her own, but a recent correspondence in the *Observer* from frustrated middle-class mothers shows that something beyond private affluence is needed. If she lives above the first floor she cannot even let small children play outside with any feeling of security, and in any flat free play with hammer and nails or sand and water is ruled out, and in most flats even running about is not tolerated. Nor does the problem dissolve when the children reach school age, for then their needs include a social life beyond the family and interesting occupations which the small family of today cannot provide.

It is understandable that many rehoused families look back with nostalgia to their life in the slums, and that older children are drawn irresistibly to the markets and shopping areas to find adventure, often of a delinquent kind.

Campaigns Needed

Reactionary authorities believe that more than enough has been done for the working class if they are provided with new houses or flats in place of the slums. If we complain that families are isolated, that nothing has been done to replace (let alone improve on) the social life of the street and doorstep, and that even the old backyard has been lost, this is regarded as outrageous and revolutionary. It would be indeed outrageous to use such complaints to justify slums and halt progress to good housing—and it is revolutionary to declare that new homes are not enough and to demand the other social provisions that are needed to prevent ill-health.

Amenities which are essential to children, such as nursery schools, play centres, swimming pools, sports facilities, adventure play grounds, have never yet been provided without political campaigning of some kind. If any further evidence

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were needed that these are political questions, one only has to quote the complaints of people who try to start "do-it-yourself" nursery schools (because the authorities will not provide them), and find that they cannot get premises because of the high rents demanded.

Whose Responsibility?

It must be recognised that local authorities find great difficulty in providing amenities, even those which they admit are desirable. Government finance is restricted in order to pay for "defence"; land and premises have to be found at thousands of pounds per acre, and money has to be borrowed at $5\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. The demand for essential extras therefore involves a struggle against cold war policies and against a social structure in which rent, interest and profit have priority over everything else. If we add to the demands made upon local authorities such extras as work for women near home, with hours to suit them, and school holidays, and adequate payment to widows so that they can if they wish stay at home with their children, it becomes clear that the demand for preventive measures is revolutionary. It is much easier to wait for the casualties (always hoping they may not occur). Authorities in fact are obliged to do something for the victims, such as providing for homeless children, and for children of mothers who are obliged to work. If they do a bit better than just provide "parking places" for the children, they are still carrying out only a reformist policy, without ever conceding the socialist principle that everyone has a right to the conditions which prevent their becoming casualties.

The ruling class solution to all children's problems is to push back on to the family all responsibility, and all the guilt for failure. Their phrases are all too familiar ("the parents are to blame", "they should look after their own children", "mothers should stay at home and not work for pin-money", etc.). They are not concerned about the isolation of families, the "fragmentation" of society, in fact they fear too much getting together on the part of the working class for any serious purpose.

Our answer must be to make it clear that no individual family (especially the small urban family of today) can of its own resources provide all that is necessary for the children's welfare. Parents are given a fair amount of information about recognising symptoms of distress, and their own part in causing distress, and this may only add to their anxiety. It would be much more useful if they knew more about the needs of the normal child, for it would not only help them as parents but would assist their political development. The first steps in taking part in political campaigns on these issues may also be first steps towards ending their personal isolation and frustration, as many who have joined in such activities must have realised.

Any progress which is possible within capitalist society towards giving children what they need, not only brings us up against the realities of that society and the need to change it, but also poses the question: "What kind of relations between the individual and society make for the happy family which all agree is essential for personal development?" This is a complex question to which any Utopian answer would be quite inadequate, and which is therefore beyond the scope of a short contribution. I hope that in future issues of *Marxism Today* an opportunity will be found for discussing this question, and others arising from it.

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